Chronicles

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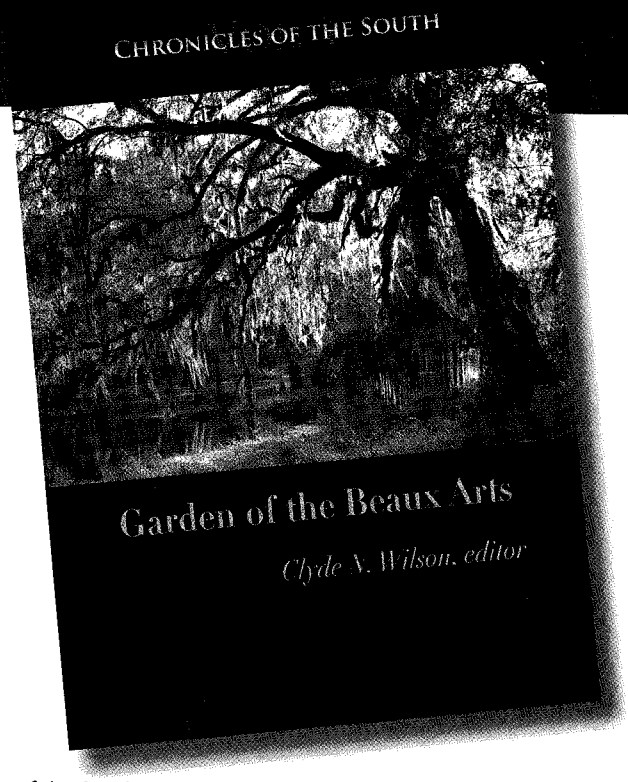

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—Clyde N. Wilson, editor

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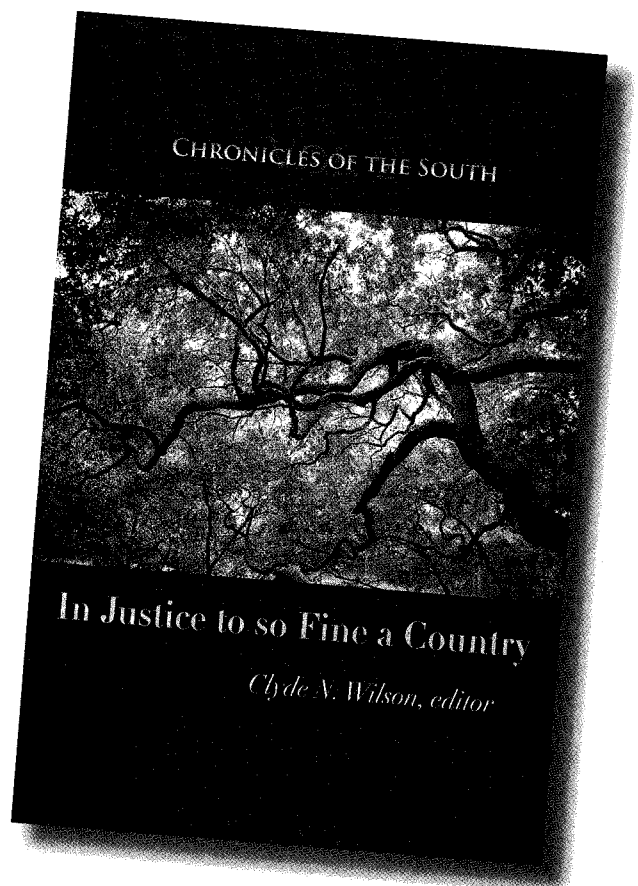

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BEYOND THE REVOLUTION

Five Really Good Reasons Not To Be an Atheist 10
by Thomas Fleming

VIEWS

The Necessity of Christianity 12
by Claude Polin

The One Civilization 16
by James Patrick

NEWS

Why Is the Supreme Court So Slow? 21
by William J. Quirk

REVIEWS

World of War 24
by Srdja Trifkovic
Robert R. Reilly, *The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis*

Happy Warriors 27
by Justin Raimondo
Evan Thomas, *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898*

Back to Hamilton 29
by William J. Quirk
Paul Craig Roberts, *How the Economy Was Lost: The War of the Worlds*

CORRESPONDENCE

Prosperity 34
by Clyde Wilson

The Bookman 36
by Wayne Allensworth

Johnny Johnson 38
by Christopher Sandford

VITAL SIGNS

Top-Heavy Schools 43
by William Murchison

Hitting the Wall 46
by Mark G. Brennan

COLUMNS

Justice Entrapment 23
by Justin Raimondo

Joe Sobran as I Knew Him 31
by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Leaving London, 2005 42
by Andrei Navrozov

Include Me Out 48
The Social Network
by George McCartney

Common Slobbery 50
by Taki Theodoracopulos

POETRY

"Teleology" 19
"To the Grand Canyon" 33
by Mark Amorose

Polemics & Exchanges 4
American Proscenium 6
Cultural Revolutions 8

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Pro-WikiLeaks

In "What Consequences?" (*Cultural Revolutions*, October), R. Cort Kirkwood stated (with regard to the WikiLeaks case) that Army Pfc. Bradley "Manning is a traitor. He deserves the firing squad." Just the same as a German soldier would have been executed as a traitor for revealing documents about the Nazi concentration camps.

Mr. Kirkwood, I am just as loyal an American as you are. I served my country for eight years on active duty in the 50's. As an American and a Catholic I expect our soldiers to adhere to certain standards of conduct, and if they are laughing and joking about shooting innocent civilians for sport, I want to know about it. If Mr. Kirkwood considers this anti-American, then he fails to appreciate the consequences of our government hiding its misdeeds behind a veil of secrecy. I understand that under the stress of combat things will be done that shouldn't be done, and I would certainly allow much leeway in judging conduct. But the consequences of simply saying "stuff happens" can be seen in the behavior of the Nazi and Japanese militaries in World War II.

—Robert A. Charron
Raleigh, NC

Mr. Kirkwood Replies:

Comparing American military forces with the Nazis who were slaughtering Jews is an outrageous false analogy. Mr. Manning was not exposing murderous concentration-camp guards. He was exposing, in addition to those soldiers who might have been committing war crimes (a very small percentage of them), a great many of his other comrades who are good and decent men risking their lives in a cause they believe to be just.

Mr. Charron then claims that I think he is anti-American to expect GIs not to joke about killing innocent civilians for sport. He also claims that I believe "stuff happens." These arguments are straw men, the second informal fallacy in his short letter. I wrote nothing of the kind. Nor do I think it.

After the informal fallacies, he stated that I fail to appreciate the consequences of the government hiding its misdeeds. This argument has no premise at all, and is an example of begging the question. Again, I wrote nothing of the kind, and nothing in my piece suggests that I believe that.

Beyond that, as I wrote in my piece, neither Mr. Charron nor anyone else needed to see these documents to know our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are grave foreign-policy errors. Nor did he need to see them to know that certain young men who join the military will go berserk and commit war crimes, or that, in fact, some of those young men have, indeed, committed such crimes.

To Arms!

Concerning Scott P. Richert's reservations about secession, as expressed in the October *Rockford Files* ("To Secede or Succeed?"): Maybe "many proponents of secession seem reluctant to consider" some of the alleged drawbacks of secession. There certainly are risks. The architects of unitary nationalism weren't dummies. The grants economy, the safety net, Social Security, and the ever-present threat-to-our-national-security warmongering have effectively precluded any mass clamoring for secession.

The calculated risks of military action from the Beltway-bound miasma should be duly noted. Lincoln didn't hesitate, and it's part of the central state's arsenal to bludgeon its recalcitrant wards into involuntary subservience to its will. The internal (and external) loosing of its terrible

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swift sword at the drop of a hat is indeed a pox. We've been co-opted by the disasters endemic to the idolatry of glorifying the coming of a false god which doesn't care upon whom its phalanxes of peck-sniffs and pettifogs trample. Nonetheless, it's time to give the central government a "time out." The nation is divisible, and that by (let's pick a number out of the air) 50. The analogies of unfit commanders, pilots, captains, leaders, *etc.*, and their removals for the safety of those aboard must command our attention.

When the evils endemic to unified nationalism are listed parallel to Richert's concerns, then a clearer picture of the requisite action emerges unless a frank audit of our courage index nixes the whole thing anyway. What we're doing now isn't working. And really, what do we have to lose?

To me, on all these accounts, the iron is hot, and we should strike now. No one is secure with Social Security. And our federal troops are already stretched in the "Crap-istan" quagmires.

Prudent considerations should take note of the administration's reaction to the attempts of some states to defend themselves by various Tenth Amendment ploys. Also, states should make sure they do not land-lock themselves and get boxed in by pro-union states and uncooperative Canadian/Mexican borders.

Richert's "just relax and enjoy it" is one of the formulas I've heard advised for women in the process of being raped. Was this intentional? His centralization-is-inevitable game plan soporifics sound like something out of the pulpit and have some merit, but we're doing these things already. Is he aware of a biblically irrefutable sermon on "The Christian Prayer Meeting and the Grants Economy?" How does one practice charity responsibly in a welfare society? Why do I get a better sermon at times from reading Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams (who also advocates secession) than I do from the pulpit? What does "give us this day our daily bread" mean with the advent of the safety net?

Secession together with the requisite faith and repentance would make life livable again. I was overjoyed when I received the October issue of *Chronicles* and saw the front cover ("Leaving the State"). Thank you.

—*L.E. Sheldon*
Brule, NE

Mr. Richert Replies:

I cannot quite decide whether Mr. Sheldon has badly misunderstood the point of my column or whether his passion for secession has led him to misrepresent what I wrote. In recalling the advice one-time Texas gubernatorial candidate Clayton Williams offered to rape victims, I specifically rejected taking the attitude of "just relax and enjoy it" toward centralization. Nor did I suggest that "centralization is inevitable"; in fact, I specifically recommended actions that the average person can take to oppose it.

But for Mr. Sheldon, any effort to oppose centralization that falls short of secession is apparently the same as giving in to the centralized regime.

What Mr. Sheldon does not do at any point in his lengthy letter is address the central question of my column, the question that "many proponents of secession seem reluctant to consider": Is political secession possible today, given the level of economic and cultural centralization in the United States? I think the answer is almost certainly no, for reasons I discussed in my column. But that means that anyone who cares, as I do, about political decentralization must first begin the much harder work of economic and cultural decentralization.

To do otherwise is to doom any secessionist movement to failure. Even historians friendly to the South have noted that the dependence of Southern states on external trade in 1860 put those states at a disadvantage that they were never able to overcome during the Late Unpleasantness. And yet those states look like shining examples of self-sufficiency, especially in foodstuffs and other agricultural products, compared with any state in the United States today.

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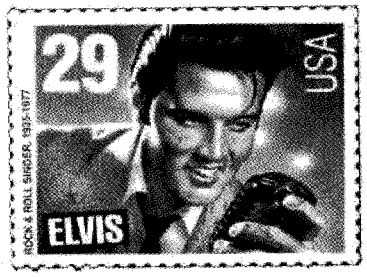

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America's Defense Bleed-Out

by John C. Seiler, Jr.

IN THE RUN-UP to the November elections, Republicans comforted themselves by passing around an analysis by the bipartisan Congressional Budget Office showing that spending on the Iraq war so far has been "only" $709 billion. They pointed out that President Obama's wasteful stimulus actually cost $100 billion more.

And they touted the $709 billion number as refuting the calculation by Nobel economics laureate (and Democrat) Joseph Stiglitz that the cost of the Iraq war was much higher. Stiglitz put forth his data in *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict*, his 2008 book written with economist Linda J. Bilmes of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

The Republicans are wrong; Stiglitz is right. The main cause of the debilitation of the U.S. economy is the immense expense of "defense"—the Iraq war, the Afghanistan war, the vast global empire occupying more than 130 countries, and "defense" spending in general.

As Stiglitz and Bilmes explained in a September 29 conference call that included *Stars and Stripes*, the military's own newspaper, their new calculations put the cost of the Iraq War as high as six trillion dollars. "We are presenting a new paper with updated costs at the American Economic Association annual meeting in January," Bilmes told me.

The reason the Stiglitz-Bilmes numbers are higher is that they account for such expenses as care for veterans, payments on the money borrowed from China and elsewhere to fund the wars, and the high cost of oil, which they blame directly on the war. I think the real reason is that the Federal Reserve Board debased the currency—the dollar's value has dropped 75 percent against gold since 2001—to pay for the war on the cheap. The result is the same: Higher oil and gasoline costs for everyone.

Reported *Stars and Stripes*,

> Bilmes said about 600,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have already sought medical treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and 500,000 have applied for disability benefits. That's about 30 percent higher than initial estimates for care, and could cost the department nearly $1 trillion in costs for the current wars alone.

In past wars, even Vietnam, someone with part of his head blown off would bleed out on the battlefield. Now he's choppered to a Combat Support Hospital (which in 2006 replaced the old MASH units), his life is saved by the world's best medical care, and he returns home to decades hooked up to tubes. All of which is extremely expensive.

Others with lesser wounds can still spend the rest of their lives in and out of VA care. Given that most war supporters' only experience with the military is watching FOX News propaganda, it's understandable they wouldn't include taking care of veterans as part of the cost of war.

Debt also is crucial, especially as China is getting antsy about all of the rapidly devaluing greenbacks she holds. The CBO study calculated that the $709 billion spent on the war contributed less than 8 percent of the $9 trillion in federal debt the public held in 2010. But if the Iraq war's true cost is $6 trillion, then the proportion of the debt from the war zooms up to 68 percent—and more if the war in Afghanistan is included.

But the direct costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are only part of the costs of "defense" spending. Although some military spending is necessary to defend a country, much as any good father and husband will keep several guns in good working order, too much spending on the military debilitates an economy, even one as rich as America's.

In the 1960's and 70's, a scholar named Seymour Melman wrote several books on the true costs of excessive defense spending, including *Pentagon Capitalism: The Political Economy of War* (1970) and *Our Depleted Society* (1965). In the latter, he noted how the Defense Department's vast purchases had made the machine-tool industry "less sensitive to pressures from other customers for reducing the prices of its products." The result? This industry was eclipsed by those in Europe and Japan.

I asked Bilmes if similar research is being conducted by economists today. She said she didn't know of any. (This would be excellent work for young economists. The challenge will be getting through the immense secrecy that now surrounds military production.)

Southern California, perhaps surprisingly to some, remains America's largest industrial area, despite attempts by enviro-crazy state politicians to drive industry to Arizona. Over the course of my 23 years in Orange County, some executives in manufacturing industries have told me that defense spending is a large part of their business. Yet even they don't know exactly what goes on.

Defense officials give security clearances only to engineers, scientists, and technicians working directly on a military project, which is conducted in spe-

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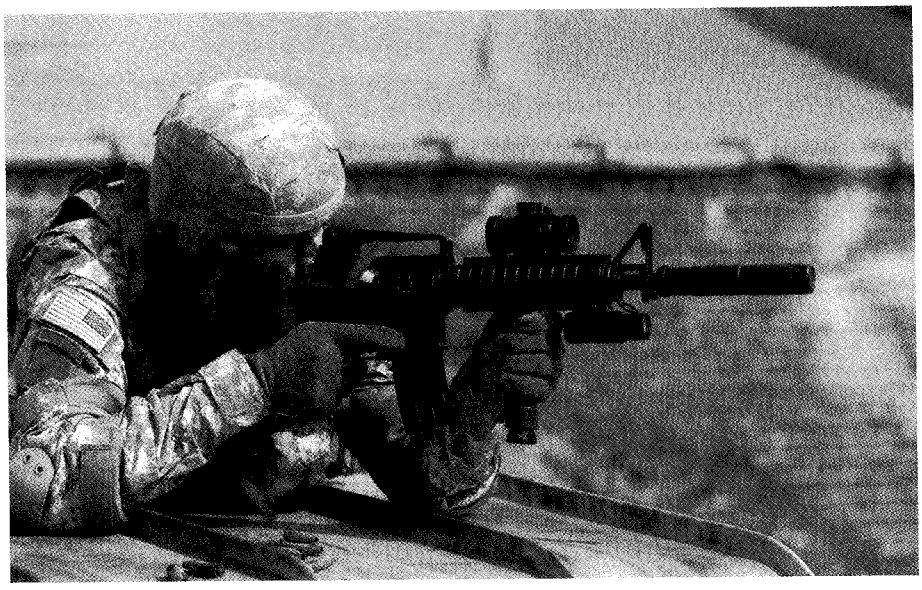
cial sealed-off areas. The "cost-plus" payments mean there's always a profit. And the government's checks always clear, unlike private contracts, where a client might go broke.

The problem for the economy at large is that all these top-level engineers, scientists, and technicians—and the military wants the best, and pays for the best—aren't building Buicks and Fords and Chryslers. Meanwhile, in America's major automotive competitors—Japan, Germany, and even South Korea—where defense spending is kept artificially low by the presence of American troops, top engineers work for Toyota, Porsche, and Hyundai. The same goes for making televisions, refrigerators, and microchips.

The September 11 *Los Angeles Times* featured a story, "Drone industry a boost to Southland's aerospace industry," which offered a rare insight into top-secret military production. The drone industry "employs an estimated 10,000 people. The fast-growing business is fueled by Pentagon spending—at least $20 billion since 2001—and billions more chipped in by the CIA and Congress."

It's a perfect government program. The drone industry drains top talent from competitive civilian firms. The drones blow up wedding parties in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The enraged extended families vow *jihad* against America. Future terror strikes on America engender additional U.S. retaliatory attacks on those countries and elsewhere. This requires higher defense spending to pay for more drones. Meanwhile, America goes broke, and her nonmilitary industrial base (which, in the end, has to be the foundation of everything) deteriorates.

Something similar happened during the Vietnam War, America's longest until the Afghan war eclipsed it in 2010. In *Vain Hopes, Grim Realities: The Economic Consequences of the Vietnam War* (1976), Robert Warren Stevens showed that, as President Lyndon Johnson escalated the war



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from 1965 to 1968, major areas of the civilian economy declined: residential investment, consumers' purchases of nondurable goods, consumer services, and net exports.

The hangover from the spending bender of the Vietnam War was the "Nixon Shock" of 1971, especially going off the gold standard, leading to the stagflation of the 1970's "malaise economy." But in the 70's, the federal debt was a fraction of what it is today. America still ran a trade surplus. Social Security, government pensions, and other obligations were much smaller. And personal and business debt were lower.

While cleaning up the mess in my apartment the other day, I came upon an old file labeled "SOVIETS—Empire Costs." Inside was an opinion piece from the November 27, 1989, *Orange County Register*, written by Ken Adelman, the former director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the Reagan administration. Later, in the lead-up to President George W. Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq, top neocon Adelman famously guaranteed it would be a "cakewalk."

Back in 1989, as Eastern Europe was freeing itself from the Soviet yoke, Adelman wrote of how Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's

> coffers pour a whopping $7 billion or so yearly into Cuba. . . . Gorbachev signs checks . . . totaling between $3 and $3.6 billion yearly—to help the Afghan Marxists cling to power . . . $500 million yearly to Nicaragua. . . . $2 billion plus worth of military equipment to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and $1.5 billion in military equipment to Angola.

Adelman added it up: Inflation, declining living standards, and economic collapse were hitting the Soviets. He quoted Gorby: "Frankly speaking, comrades, we underestimated the full depth of the deformations and stagnation." Two years later, the Soviet Union collapsed.

More than two decades later, the same deformations and stagnation have struck the last global empire. The Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and the immense military-industrial complex, have robbed the best talent from our civilian industries while bleeding the country dry. There will be no return to prosperity until the wars are ended, the empire dismantled, military spending cut sharply, and the swords turned into plowshares.

John Seiler, a U.S. Army veteran, writes for CalWatchDog.com.

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Heightened Scrutiny

FEDERAL JUDGES in California have been busy. In August, Judge Vaughn Walker held that it is irrational to limit marriage to one man and one woman. Following in Judge Walker's footsteps, Judge Virginia A. Phillips struck down the congressional prohibition against homosexuals in the military as violating the First Amendment and the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment.

The press has described Judge Phillips' ruling in *Log Cabin Republicans* v. *United States* as a repudiation of Don't Ask, Don't Tell. That is incorrect. Judge Phillips struck down Title 10, Section 654 of the U.S Code, which effectively prohibits homosexuals from serving in the Armed Forces. The statute demands immediate separation from the Armed Forces of a person who engages in or attempts to engage in a homosexual act, states that he or she is homosexual, or marries or attempts to marry a person of the same sex. Congressional policy statements recorded in the preamble to the statute clearly state that "[t]he presence in the armed forces of persons who demonstrate a propensity or intent to engage in homosexual acts would create an unacceptable risk to the high standards of morale, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion that are the essence of military capability."

After making campaign promises to the homosexual lobby, in 1993 President Clinton urged Congress to end the military's ban on homosexuals. This prompted Congress to study the issue and come up with Section 654, which rejected the Clinton administration's proposal. Congress determined that military society is characterized by customs and rules that would not be acceptable in civilian society. It further found that members of the Armed Forces are often forced into primitive living conditions for extended periods of time. The presence of homosexuals, Congress concluded, could adversely affect morale and unit cohesion in spartan military environments.

Because large majorities of the House and Senate concurred in these findings and passed Section 654, the Clinton administration went into spin mode. Rather than executing the law passed by Congress, the White House designed enforcement regulations more in line with President Clinton's proposed legislation. Thus, Don't Ask, Don't Tell was never passed by Congress and, despite the headlines, was not at the heart of Judge Phillips' ruling.

In reviewing Section 654, Judge Phillips subjected the statute to heightened scrutiny because of the law's effect on fundamental rights. In identifying the fundamental right at issue, the court referenced substantive Due Process rights "identified in *Lawrence* as rights associated with the 'autonomy of self that includes freedom of thought, belief, expression, and certain intimate conduct.'" *Lawrence*, of course, was the Supreme Court decision holding that state laws criminalizing homosexual conduct are irrational. So Judge Phillips assumed that, like a criminal defendant's right to a jury trial, homosexual conduct is deeply rooted in our country's history and traditions and, thus, fundamental.

To pass the test for heightened scrutiny, a statute must advance an important government interest, the government intrusion must significantly further the interest, and the intrusion must be necessary to further that interest. The court agreed that the statute advanced important government interests related to military readiness and unit cohesion, but denied that Section 654 furthered these interests. The main factors relied upon by the court were the military's recent difficulties in recruiting and the costs associated with training new enlistees to replace homosexual service members discharged because of Section 654. The court noted that the number of discharges related to Section 654 has dropped during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. This led the court to conclude that the military has little real concern about homosexuals disrupting units. The court also found that military barracks are now built to give service members more privacy than traditional military living quarters.

The district court's analysis in *Log Cabin Republicans* hardly recognizes that the Constitution delegates to Congress, not to the courts, the specific power to "make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces." In light of this fact, other court decisions regarding military discipline give great deference to Congress's power to raise, support, and regulate the Armed Forces. Even the Supreme Court has observed that "it is difficult to conceive of an area of governmental activity in which the courts have less competence" than in military affairs.

Judge Phillips' decision, however, gives little deference to Congress's legislative finding regarding military conditions and life. This is embodied in the use of heightened scrutiny and the supposition that homosexual conduct is a fundamental right. Even the recent federal decision from Judge Vaughn Walker regarding marriage used rational-basis review, which is much less demanding than the framework applied in *Log Cabin Republicans*.

Of course, under any reasonable standard, Section 654's prohibition on homosexuals in the Armed Services reflects a legitimate policy choice. The congressional findings described above are inherently reasonable and resulted from in-depth studies and hearings examining the compatibility of homosexuality and military culture.

In a sane world, jurists would leave regulation of the Armed Forces to the political branches. If Congress believes that Section 654 is not in the national interest, it can repeal the statute. This almost happened in September when the House approved a conditional repeal of Section 654. Senate

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Democrats, however, did not have enough votes to push the measure through.

But instead of a sane world, we inhabit one in which judicial restraint is but a specter. Even on critical matters such as national defense, unelected judges seek to overrule the people's elected representatives.

If the federal government appeals and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirms, Supreme Court review is likely because other circuit courts have upheld the constitutionality of Section 654. Unfortunately, Americans have little reason to believe that the current Supreme Court will be more deferential to the elected branches than Judge Phillips was.

—William J. Watkins

What's in a Name?

TIME WAS, when someone used the term *American*, or *Canadian*, *Briton*, or *German*, you knew what he meant. The man or woman in question was white and had a name such as Smith, Jones, or Muller. Or the American might be black, most likely a descendant of slaves. Perhaps he was an Indian, meaning an Apache from Arizona, not a Brahmin from Bombay. But alas, the neocons and their leftist media allies tell us, you never know. America is not a real place with a settled language, culture, religion, and ethnic core but an "idea." Anyone who accepts this "idea" or "proposition," as they also call it, is an American. To paraphrase the late Samuel Francis, that would include Ubangi women with lip plates large enough to inscribe the Declaration of Independence and Constitution with room left over for the *Federalist*.

Thus it is that Arab terrorists living in the West, by virtue of birth, now rate identification as "Americans," "Canadians," "Britons," or "Germans." Consider some recent headlines.

Most recently, from *msnbc.com*, we learned that a "Canadian Gitmo prisoner admits he was [a] teenage al-Qaida militant." The name of this "Canadian"? Omar Khadr. If that doesn't sound "Canadian," perhaps that's because it isn't. His parents were Egyptian and Palestinian.

On September 8, a "Briton" named Abdul Jabbar (no relation to the man whose parents named him Lew Alcindor) was among the terrorists killed in an American drone strike in Pakistan. Jabbar commanded something called the Islamic Army of Britain. Authorities connected him to the failed Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad. Shahzad was a "Connecticut man" who, some news reports said, planted his car bomb because of "mortgage woes."

CIA drone strikes killed eight "German" militants in that attack and eight more in October. Among those killed were a "German of Syrian descent" and a "German of Iranian descent." Oddly, none of the dead were named Otto or Herman, although one terrorist the authorities arrested in July was Ahmed Sidiqui, "a German from Hamburg."

By this leftist reckoning, Nidal Hasan, the Muslim terrorist who killed 13 Americans at Fort Hood in November 2009, was a "Virginia" man because he was "born in Arlington." His parents were Palestinian immigrants, but he was "homegrown." "Homegrown" is the official media term that implies that some uniquely American pathology drove him to begin murdering American soldiers while shouting "*Allahu Akbar*!" Time was, "homegrown" "Virginia men" had names like Washington and Lee. And Jefferson, Stuart, and Pickett. Now, Virginians are named Nidal.

Or perhaps Omar Abu Ali. A graduate of the Saudi Islamic Academy, just a stone's throw from Mount Vernon and Gunston Hall, Ali is the estimable citizen convicted of trying to assassinate President George W. Bush. But he was, Wikipedia assures us, an "American." He was born in Houston to Jordanian immigrants, which means he is also a "Texan." Just like Stephen Austin and Coke Stevenson.

Examples abound, but you get the point. *American* doesn't mean much anymore. Any member of the human race, from Eskimos who dine on whale blubber to the neck-stretching Kayan women of Burma, can be an American (or Canadian, Briton, or German), as long as they abide an "idea" and a "proposition." They needn't speak English. Nor know Melville and Twain. I don't know what Germany's and Britain's "ideas" are, but most of the immigrants who come here don't much care about the neocons' "idea," if they even know what it is. As for this land's laws, culture, language, and history, the real things that make it unique, the immigrants care even less. Boone and Crockett? They don't understand them. Common civility and the law? They don't understand why the law forbids beating your wife or mowing your daughter down in a car because she is "too Westernized." Or why bribing cops and politicians is a crime. They come to find their fortune. They come to milk the welfare state. They come to kill us. Or maybe it's just their "homegrown" children. So much for "assimilation."

Which brings us back to the media. They will hear none of this. A pack of immigrants taking the oath of citizenship, having passed a dumbed-down first-grade civics test, "diversifies" the front page and proves the merit of the "idea." Anyone can be an American.

—R. Cort Kirkwood

Obiter Dicta

Our poet this month is **Mark Amorose**, who lives in Mesa, Arizona with his wife, Maria, and their seven children. His poems have recently appeared in, or are forthcoming from, *First Things*, *Modern Age*, *Measure*, and several other publications.

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Five Really Good Reasons

ATHEISM is once again the rage. These religious fads come and go like skirt lengths or medical trends. When I was a child, everyone I knew had had his tonsils out. My mother was more conservative: The tonsils were there for a reason, she said, so why remove them without a good reason? A later generation of physicians have assured me that, on balance, my mother made the right decision, though by now the pendulum may have swung back to universal tonsillectomies.

My mother, without knowing it, was making a backward argument from design. God or Nature would not have given us tonsils unless they served a purpose, which implies the reverse that the universe is so well constructed that there must be a design—and a designer. The natural order is one of the arguments most frequently employed to prove the existence of god. (I am going to use the lowercase *g* for just any deity and restrict the upper-case version for the Creator of heaven and earth worshiped by believing Jews and Christians.) "The heavens declare the glory of God," sings the psalmist, and nonbelievers have no excuse, says Saint Paul, because "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." This would not be so, argues Saint Thomas, unless it were possible to demonstrate God's existence through His works.

More recent variations on this proof include intelligent-design theory, which incorporates evidence from the modern sciences to reach the same conclusion, and the "anthropic principle," which argues backward from human consciousness to a Creator Who guides the evolution of this consciousness. Growing up as an atheist, I heard many of these "proofs," and none of them ever impressed me much. Biologists and physicists have gone a long way toward eliminating the need for a creator, even the Newtonian watchmaker who wound up the world and walked away, letting it go on ticking until the end of time.

I am not entirely certain what it would have taken to convert the young atheist I was. I do not think any line of reasoning would have done it. Although I fully agree that the existence of god is knowable and demonstrable, not all minds are open to the demonstration. If we can judge by our contemporaries, it is precisely the most scientific and rationalist minds that are most closed to the idea of god. Apologists counter with the argument that atheist scientists are simply being perverse, but it is something of a *petitio principi* to declare that the mark of rationality is to agree with us. A rational mind, properly trained, will probably accept the god hypothesis, but neither Porphyry nor Plotinus could be argued into accepting Christianity. Antony Flew was probably not really being irrational when, as the son of a clergyman, he embraced atheism; and pure reason, while it led him ultimately to embrace an abstract sort of theism, did not actually bring him to the Christian Faith.

When I was a child, many Christians who talked about their religion struck me as uncomfortably smug. On the other hand, my sturdy Catholic aunts made it pretty plain that I was going to Hell, if I did not begin following orders that came from Heaven by way of Rome. Whenever I stayed with them, they dragged me off to Mass, over my protestations that I had a bellyache or something—anything to keep me out of church. I loved my aunts, however, especially Catherine McDonald, and later in my life it was some comfort to know she had been praying for me. In college I became friends with two evangelicals, and, while I despised their feeble philosophy, I had to acknowledge the fineness of their character. They pitied me for my disbelief and my dissolution, but they hardly ever preached at me. At some point, it began to dawn on me that good Christians were, by and large, better people than the good atheists I knew. Besides, the Christians were a good deal less polemical. I had always been an atheist and took the nonexistence of god for granted, but I could never understand the passionate hatred exhibited by atheist converts for the god that did not exist. They are like the small boys who have discovered that Santa Claus is a myth and take pleasure in depriving younger children of the jolly old elf.

It was the character of Christians, then, and not their arguments that first began to undermine my simplistic faith in a nonsensical universe. No theistic philosophy could have penetrated my closed mind. Pinning faith to any particular stage of logic and science can be risky, because cosmology is a competitive business. Once upon a time people were content with the elephant standing on a turtle's back; the far wiser early Greeks spoke of Chaos—the separation of heaven and earth—from which all the

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things of our universe were generated in stages, while later Greeks either accepted the arguments of Aristotle (that God was the ultimate cause or mover) or sided with the materialists, who insisted that the universe could be explained exclusively in terms of atoms and void. If there be any gods, argued Epicurus, we know nothing of them, and they care nothing for us. Better just not to think about it.

As I said in the beginning, these fashions come and go. The atoms-*cum*-void in a godless infinity had a pretty good run in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the science boys are pretty confident—as confident as Epicurus was—that they can eliminate the god hypothesis from polite conversation, though so far only about two percent of the world's population professes atheism. The task is perhaps more daunting than Richard Dawkins realizes. Knowing neither philosophy nor theology, Dawkins barely seems to understand the fundamentals of the religion he would like to destroy.

CARD-CARRYING ATHEISTS like Dawkins portray themselves as apostles of reason and scholarship contending against irrational and ignorant bigots. In fact, professional atheists, while pretending to engage in a free and fair debate, always seem to rig the match so there can be but one outcome. In one corner, wearing the white trunks of intellectual superheroes, are Newton, Darwin, and Einstein, while in the other corner are not Aristotle, Thomas, or even Bishop Butler or C.S. Lewis, but a team of impostors like Scott Hahn, Josh McDowell, and Elmer Gantry (played by Burt Lancaster). In the infamous Intelligence Squared debate on the evils of the Catholic Church, Hitchens was paired off with the charming and witty Stephen Fry against Ann Widdecombe (a Tory bureaucrat) and an African Catholic bishop completely out of his depth. The selection process was interesting. Hitchens was apparently chosen as the straight (?) white male, Fry is openly "gay," the bishop was black, while Widdecombe was the token woman. It is a good thing the producers were not around when the disciples were being selected.

These events are not debates but staged entertainments in which celebrity contestants play to the audience. All Hitchens and Fry had to do was to recite their *1066 and All That* list of the Church's crimes against humanity, from the Spanish Inquisition to child molestation, and they could persuade the halfwits who make up the audience of a TV show. If Hitchens were a serious man, he would not have taken part in such a spectacle, but he is no more serious than Stephen Fry, who is not actually a heterosexual butler, though he played one on TV.

Once upon a time, when a significant number of men tried to lead lives guided by reason, a rational argument over the existence of god might have mattered. Today, in a world that can accept Richard Dawkins as a substitute for Thomas Henry Huxley and where Hitchens and Fry can stand in for Wells and Shaw (and where oh where are the Chesterton and Belloc?), rational discourse is irrelevant. But if no positive proofs of god's existence have ever persuaded everyone, even Dawkins and Hitchens ought to understand how much more difficult it is to prove the negative. If I went to a play last night, I can probably prove the fact by showing a ticket, describing the performance, and citing witnesses, but, whether or not I actually attended, it will be very hard to prove I was not there. What if I came in after the lights went down, so no one saw me? What if I cannot remember the plot, because I fell asleep?

. . . Not To Be an Atheist

It may be impossible to "prove" the existence of god to the universal satisfaction of rational, intelligent human beings who have been indoctrinated into the tenets of atheism. On the other hand, most of the positive arguments used by atheists can be easily dismissed by a rational Christian. Plato and Aristotle have had a profound effect in demonstrating the likelihood of a universe in which the imperfect goodness, truth, and beauty found in this world are manifestations or expressions of immutable perfection that belongs to the realm of the absolute or divine. And if classical philosophy from Parmenides and Plato to Thomas Aquinas is wrong, we find ourselves stranded as aliens in a universe where beauty is nothing more than an accidental congruence between material reality and our neurological system; goodness, a sometimes successful adaptive strategy; and truth, either that which happens to approximate to what is at this moment known about the material universe or an improbable fiction.

In an age of quantum mechanics, post-Euclidean geometry, and symbolic logic, the good old arguments of Aristotle and Anselm may no longer have the clout they should have. Then let us, instead, turn the tables and look at some of the disadvantages of atheism. There are many really good reasons not to be an atheist, and the first of them, though it seems a bit tautological to say so, is that atheists have no god to worship.

Well, but that's the point, isn't it? Chris Dawkins is sure to exclaim . . .

To be continued . . . ◆

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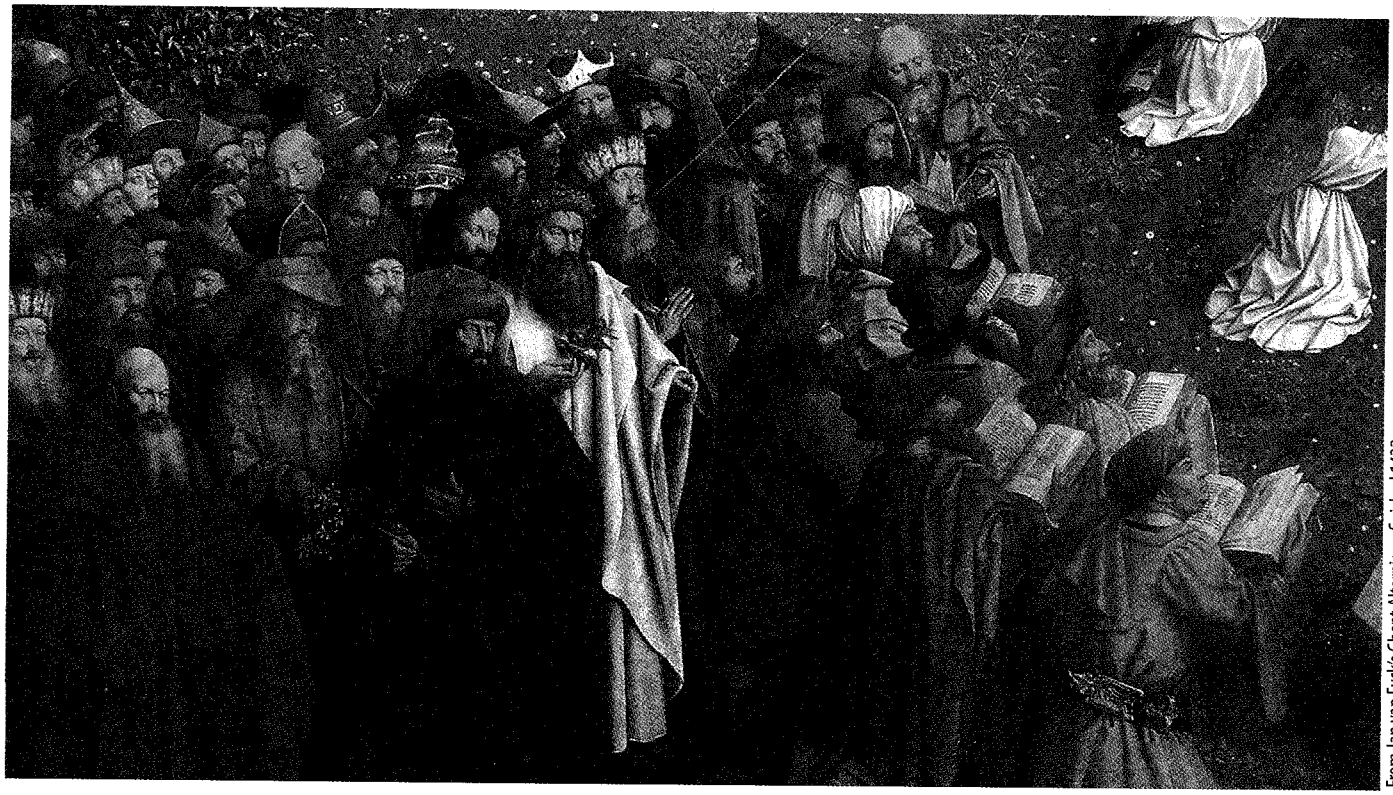

From Jan van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece, finished 1432

The Necessity of Christianity

by Claude Polin

To prove the necessity of Christianity in a few paragraphs would be an entirely foolish—if not preposterous—undertaking, were it not that volumes are not necessary to present a simple idea. By "simple" I mean able to be stated with brevity at the cost of some bluntness, rather than easy to understand fully enough to make it one's own.

I will rest the case for Christianity on an analysis of the notion of human freedom.

Christian or not, no one, at least no Westerner, will disagree, I presume, with the idea that, of all beings, man is the only one whose paramount characteristic is that he is endowed with freedom. And there is a strong probability that no culture other than the Western one has ever so strongly upheld such a view.

But, Christian or not, no one, it seems to me, has ever denied that the same being who has been favored with such an awesome gift has also demonstrated a manifest capacity for evil: It does not take a follower of Moses to acknowledge it is an unfortunate but constant necessity to forbid man to kill, steal, envy his neighbor, *etc.*

It is then rather evident that man's freedom, which is his glory, since it makes him responsible for his good deeds, is also his weakness, since it represents an innate ability to disregard any norm, any reason, any restraint. His freedom is no unmixed blessing, as the moderns would have it; it depends on how he uses it. Men must therefore learn how to use it; they must be educated. They are not born free; they have to become free.

Since the Greeks' *paideia*, the preoccupation with educating men has been a constant feature of Western culture. Even the moderns have always understood this fundamental evidence: Confronted with the necessity of preventing men from doing whatever they want, but claiming their freedom to be inalienable, the moderns came up with two—and I believe only two—solutions. I shall call the first the liberal one, and the second the socialist one.

The gist of liberal wisdom seems to be the realization that

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it is more efficient to use reason than sheer force to achieve one's goals. Any man being a potential hindrance to any other man's projects (any man can kill another, said Hobbes), the idea of subjugating them all is downright ludicrous. Whereas simple reason shows that once the basic equality of man is acknowledged, every man has a direct interest in not doing to his neighbor what he would not want done to himself, and even in helping him achieve his goals so as to be helped in return. The last word of liberal wisdom is reciprocity, or enlightened interest. But while the liberal principle is bound to reduce the use of brute and visible violence, it does nothing to prevent resorting to hidden or subtle force (like inequality between bargaining parties). Liberalism addresses the wrong issue: It is not overt aggression as much as inner aggressiveness. The liberal philosophy does not claim it is wrong to have whatever desires one may nurture, but only to satisfy them through overt violence. Hence the constant resort to contracting, for contract is not peace but the continuation of war by other means.

So much so that another school was soon born. Absolute freedom, as its teaching goes, is a natural right of all men, but a vast majority of them are deprived of the enjoyment of their right by a few other evil ones who have succeeded in living off the enslavement of their fellow men and must therefore be dealt with in some (radical) way or other. Now, if the liberal school can be considered cynical, what of the socialist one? It represents the crudest imaginable expression of that childish selfishness which says, *I have my demands that the others must meet. If they don't, they are simply evil and should be forced to.* Again the real issue is ignored: Evil does not lurk exclusively in the hearts of some men, but in the hearts of all.

Hence the wisdom of traditional Christianity.

The Christian doctrine professes the quintessential Western notion that man is by nature a free being, and even an absolutely free one, since man's freedom is what enables him to go against his Maker, which also means even against the nature God devised him to have. It is proof of God's love for His creatures that He wants them to obey Him freely, to be somehow His helpers, not His puppets. And it is proof of the perfection of His creation that it rests at least partially upon men loving it willingly and freely.

On the other hand, it is an essential tenet of the Christian Faith that, even though man is endowed with absolute freedom, he does not necessarily know *what* to will: His wisdom is not up to his freedom. It is even quite likely that, faced with the infinity of choices open to his unlimited freedom, this freedom becomes absurd, and man meaningless: If everything is permitted, all his free acts become equally valid, and none is worth willing more than any other, except for passing enjoyment. So much so that absolute freedom not only obviously prevents all society among men but is to Christian eyes a true and real disease, the cause of a mental imbalance. Man is like a child who wants all his whims satisfied but is unhappy when given too much leeway. His own freedom, because it requires that he act in a conscious way, makes him a lonesome being, aimlessly wandering in the gray uniformity of an amorphous, isotropic universe, fundamentally uncertain of himself.

Between Christianity and barbarity there is no middle term. But men having been made free, the necessity of the Christian inspiration does not determine its eventual triumph.

This is precisely the evidence, and common experience, that a vast number of men, and among them particularly moderns infatuated with their modernity, are passionately loath to acknowledge. The very fact that it is quite difficult, if not impossible, for any man actually to obtain everything he may happen to want obviously postpones indefinitely any clear thinking about what absolute freedom would mean if he could actually reach the point of being granted such freedom. But the very wishing for it is telling. At bottom this stems from man's sempiternal and universally widespread temptation to see himself as the master of his own destiny, the maker of his own nature, the demiurgic lord of all things, and, in a word, the only *god* to himself. It stems basically from the total denial that there is any such thing as a nature of things that looms before man's freedom and which he may, because he is free, invade and violate, even though it is perpetually to no avail: His freedom is what makes man a perpetual Icarus perpetually ignoring that the sun will forever melt his wings, preferring to use nature to his arbitrary liking, instead of trying to understand the infinite wisdom it embodies. Is it really necessary to point out how much the sacred dogma of the Rights of Man is rooted in human pride?

But this is precisely what Christianity is all about: teaching men—all men, powerful or humble—to know themselves, showing them what their true nature is, help-

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ing them mature into what they are born to be, convincing them their own arbitrary will is unable to provide them with a meaning for their existence, turning their absolute freedom into an ordered liberty. Whatever way evil is considered, it always boils down to one component rebelling against the whole of which it is a part, whereas the good is the measured balancing of all its components. Cancer is the undue proliferation of a certain type of cell, which harms the others and therefore the body, or mental alienation consists in reveling in one's subjective vision of things. Christianity's basic teaching is therefore that no man is his, that a man forfeits his own nature if he considers himself born to rule instead of to belong.

Accordingly, the Christian doctrine may be summed up in two chapters.

The first deals with human freedom. For an individual man to consider himself absolutely free is equivalent to considering himself a perfect and solitary whole owing nothing to the rest of the world and even implicitly expecting it to stoop to him. But the fact that this is unnatural for a normal man means that the individual is bound to be unable to make any sense, other than purely momentary and subjective, of a freedom with no objectively justifiable end. Then it becomes obvious the freedom of the individual must in his own eyes derive its meaning from his free participation in a whole that is neither of his own making, nor devoted to his particular goals, but is nevertheless important and meaningful to him. His true freedom, the enacting of which represents the utmost completion of his nature, is not to achieve certain subjective ends, but to serve ends to which he attaches enough of a price to be happy pursuing them. His true freedom consists not in mastering but in serving, in being not a lord but a servant. But then the worth the individual attaches to his freedom appears logically as directly proportionate to the worth of that whole to which he dedicates the use of his freedom, which eventually means that man is a creature in need of an absolute to which he can devote his life.

Now this corresponds exactly to two main Christian beliefs. First, that nothing natural has been created without a purpose, because it has been created by an omnipotent Being Whose awesome wisdom and omniscience is matched only by His infinite love for His creatures, so that there is nothing approaching the good embodied in the harmony of the universe: God and His creation are the absolute good. Second, and consequently, that each man is assigned as his personal function to do to the best of his ability whatever he has been given to do by the universal providence of

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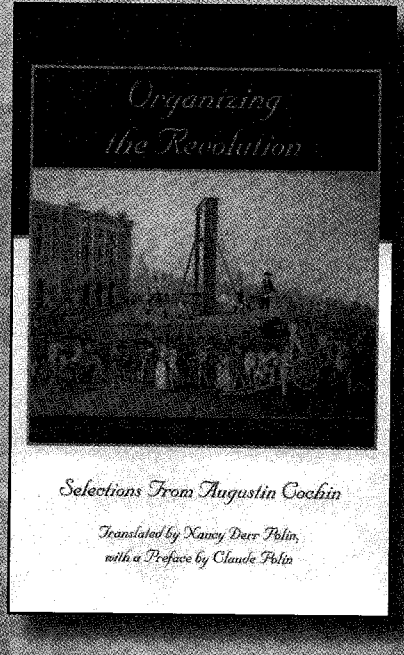
Organizing the Revolution
Selections From Augustin Cochin
Translated by Nancy Derr Polin, with a Preface by Claude Polin

Organizing the Revolution

Selections From Augustin Cochin

translated by Nancy Derr Polin

Preface by Claude Polin

Augustin Cochin (1876-1916) undertook a minute analysis of the role that provincial clubs and societies played in the genesis of the French Revolution. His work shows clearly how the revolution was organized long before the events of 1789. This translation is an attempt to present his unfinished writings in a clear and coherent form.

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God—*i.e.*, not to disrupt the order of which his own being is a dependent part, and without which he would be just a meaningless being. For he is like an actor in a play: There would be no actor if there were no play.

But does this mean that man is to God like a slave to his master, a cog in the machinery of the universe or a tool to implement ends wholly alien to him? To answer no is precisely the purpose of the second chapter of the Christian Faith. No, because in any event each man is endowed with the freedom that allows him to refuse to serve—as more and more people do today. But, more decisively, because as Christians have it (after the Stoics, it must be confessed) the universe is composed of purposefully differentiated parts which all have a specific (even if minute) and necessary role in the life of the whole. And men, since they are capable of freedom and therefore of consciously thinking out their own free decisions, are particularly expected, in a world where nothing natural has been created without a purpose, to understand (or at least believe to be understandable) how necessary their role is to the perfection of the whole. Which also means there is no contradiction between man having a nature and his achieving freedom, happiness, and dignity. True freedom and satisfaction with oneself and one's true dignity all stem from the feeling that what one does is both what one is best made to do and also something that is objectively worth doing. And what can possibly be worth doing more than what the Maker of all things has thought best for each person? What could be more satisfactory in terms of freedom, happiness, and dignity than to be convinced of one's necessity to do something that is absolutely necessary in itself and by itself?

It could then be asked why such notions must be wrapped in religious garb, why it is that Christianity is not only a philosophy but a religion. Reduced to its essence, the reason follows quite clearly, I think, from what has just been said. Nothing human can ever appear as an absolute to any man's eyes. His own absolute freedom accounts for a basic equality between human creatures that prevents him from accepting as absolutely valid anything that comes from a man. And, conversely, anything he may consider as absolutely valid must come to him as originating in something that supersedes his own natural absolute freedom, meaning something supernatural. But what belongs to that realm cannot be grasped by his natural reason; it must come as a revelation in which he must have faith and can only have faith (which, as a matter of fact, befits the Christian notion that all men are free to take their own little selves as their only true god). It may then be wondered how such a revelation can be accessible to men: It is precisely the originality of Christian faith to believe in a God Who has made Himself a man to save, that is to serve, mankind, as if to prove to all men that, while being and remaining men, they can nevertheless participate in God's essence by serving in the station they have been allotted, and, by doing that, achieving their own nature, *i.e.* transcending their own selves and being of service. So much so, again, that the originality of Christianity lies in the notion that only by knowing oneself, by descending into oneself, can each man discover the meaning of all things, including his own, *i.e.*, the wisdom of God. Which is why being a Christian starts with practicing humility, a virtue that sums up all Christian ones, for it requires faith, summons hope, and induces charity.

To remain brief, these considerations must leave aside many questions such as, notably, what to think of the Great Schism within Christianity.

But if these considerations are valid, they all lead to one conclusion: The spirit of Christianity is at bottom both necessary and irreplaceable for the contentment of the individual and the peace of mankind. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," says the Lord.

Necessary is the Christian spirit for the very simple reason that it fulfills not a human fancy, but a vital human need. I for one strongly believe no man can possibly attain contentment unless he has made something of himself, and something that he himself can consider objectively worthy of a man, which eventually is to be useful to mankind, not to himself alone.

Irreplaceable is the Christian spirit, because there is no other religion like Christianity. In a nutshell no other God has ever made His creatures able to disobey their Maker; no other religion has ever taught that God's imperatives are transcendent but also immanent; no other God has made Himself a man to prove a man could be godlike; no other god has made it plain that to enter God's kingdom men are not to give up their nature but only to complete it, not to obey God's will alone but their own true one as well.

Between Christianity and barbarity there is no middle term. But men having been made free, the necessity of the Christian inspiration does not determine its eventual triumph. The words of Christ are medicine for men's disease, but only for those who wish to take it. And men are really a discouraging species. Saint John has already foreseen God, weary of men, unleashing His anger.

Corresponding editor Claude Polin is a professor emeritus at the University of Paris-Sorbonne.

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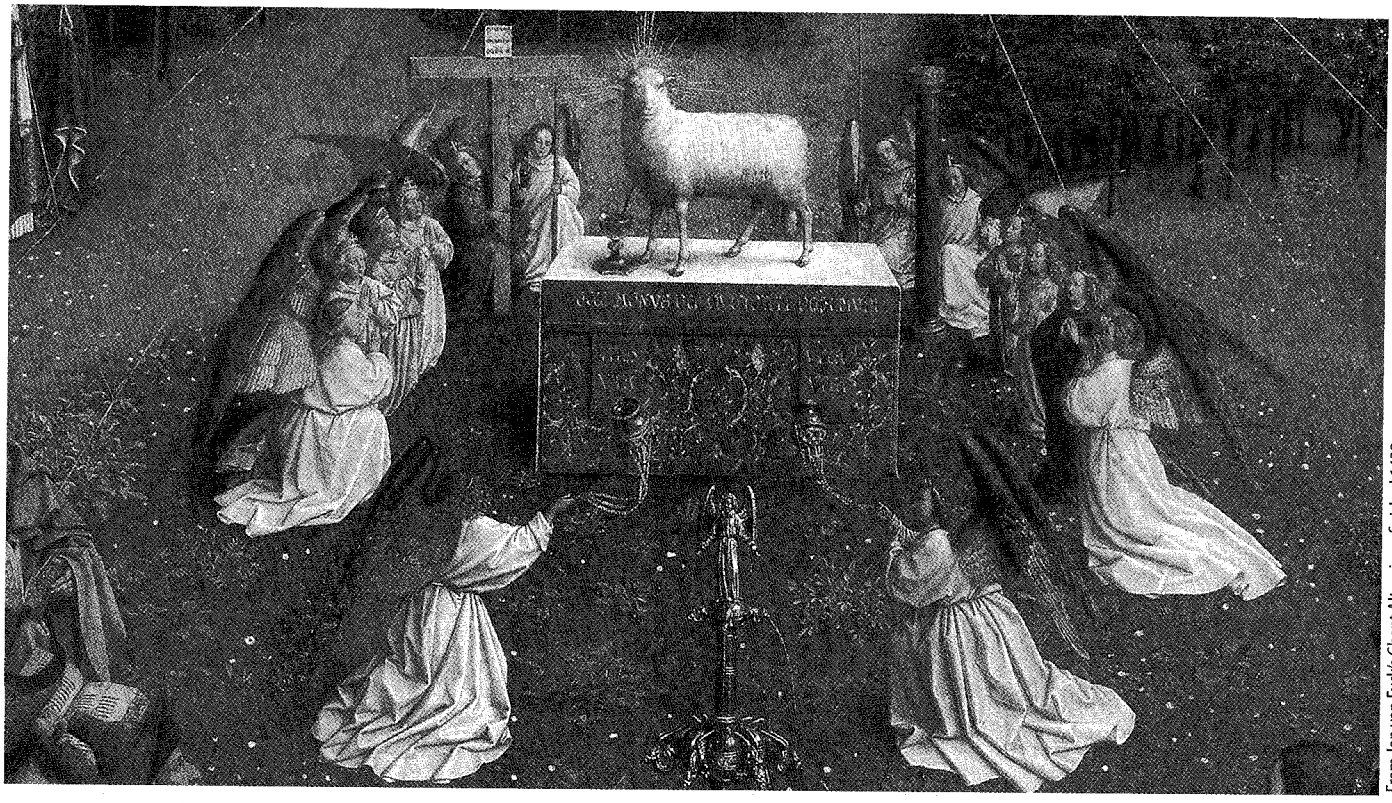

From Jan van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece, finished 1432

The One Civilization

by James Patrick

Popular culture in the West, and especially in North America, is an illusion, mostly electronic, that does not feed the soul. Indeed, it claims to do nothing but feed the senses, and as such it tends toward universal barbarism, fostering ignorance and encouraging violence.

Beneath the illusion there is, however, one great civilization, and it is the civilization built upon the Hebrew Scriptures and the best of Greek philosophy, as these were incorporated into a living religion based on the regenerating power of life in Jesus Christ. If its claim that God became Man is true, it is the fulfillment of human destiny and human history. It is the only thing that matters.

In the beginning this civilization did not raise monuments to itself, no great basilicas, no Dante, no *Adoration of the Lamb*, but it was nevertheless in place around the Mediterranean within the historical span defined by the New Testament, between A.D. 50 and 80. In the most fundamental sense, this one civilization, in contrast to the great civilization of the East, rested and rests upon two presuppositions: that *being is good*—that, in Gerard Manley Hopkins' words, there is a "freshness deep down things" that cannot be overborne by the smut of human failure and folly—and that something, something individual that *is itself* and not some other thing, truly exists. If these seem obvious it is because they have been successfully defended by a great intellectual tradition.

My purpose is to remind us of the characteristics of the only civilization that matters, characteristics which make it supremely valuable. But first, three brief historical caveats.

We should not expect that Christianity will ever present itself as a peaceable kingdom which claims the unqualified assent of all of its subjects. Historically, it has always existed at the heart of an intellectual and moral storm, beginning in the 50's with Saint Paul's converts at Corinth who, while considering themselves Christians in good standing, denied the resurrection, the central Christian dogma. From the very beginning to the present, the Church has always been involved in a battle for survival, which She has always

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won and always will, and that despite the intermittent follies and fecklessness of those who are supposed to represent and defend Her.

Persons—and, hence, civilizations—are not defined exclusively or even decisively by their moral achievements but by the axes along which their inherent moral pressures move. Christianity can provide in the lives of the saints examples of unambiguous fruition and resolution, leading decisively to the presence of God, peace, joy, and fulfillment. But as far as culture goes, all that Christianity can do is encourage the best, moderate passions, and propose a view of human nature and destiny that makes sense of the world as it is experienced. Yet this is no small thing. The claim of Christian civilization is not that it makes angels but that it may make better men.

Christian civilization is not Chartres, Amiens, and Shakespeare. It is not even the Code of Justinian and the printed Bible. It is persons in community who do certain things because they think in certain ways and are inspired in certain ways. Thus, the vast detritus of European cultural artifacts is a witness but not a living reality, especially now, when the artifacts of the noble past exist in weakened context or none at all. It is easy to think that the makers of Chartres and Amiens were stonecutters and sculptors. But the ultimate maker was Christ, and the stone and glass gain their significance as an act of praise to Him.

The civilization Christ made is still alive and very well, and if it is not a majority culture in the European West, a proposition which I consider debatable—something that has to be put to death so persistently and proclaimed obsolete annually is hardly dead—it is still the only culture worth knowing or worth living in. Furthermore, it has often flourished best when opposition has made its members clarify their loyalties; prosperity and cultural dominance have never been unmixed blessings. The Founder never promised a conclusive historical triumph or indeed an historical triumph of any kind. He asked, instead, "When I return, will I find any faith?" Since the Constantinian century, when Eusebius could write of the emperor as savior of the world, the Church has been bedeviled by a longing for the reassurance provided by political affirmation. Whether the expression of Christian faith achieved in such hostile environments as a Marxist gulag, sub-Saharan Africa, or Manhattan in the 1970's had greater success than the apparent triumphs of the age of Augustine or Aquinas is at least an open question.

Christianity is a civilization like no other because it rests on the foundation of what Newman would call a fact, that fact being the power of Pentecost, purchased by the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to renew and perfect human nature. It is a life lived objectively in the light of the condescending love of God and fed by the sacraments that join the believer to the Lord, notably the Eucharist, the celebration of which is perhaps still the single act shared most widely by citizens of the world Christ made.

Since the Founder was both a divine-human Person and Reason Himself, the civilization Christ inspired could never inhabit the precincts of unreason. With Justin Martyr's claim, made at the dawn of the Christian world, that whatever is true belongs to Christians, the degeneration of the Faith Christ and His apostles taught into a cult or an enthusiasm was forever precluded.

Christianity created a literature whose compelling truth and vivifying images found out the meaning of the old philosophers and led imagination into the terrain occupied by Dante and Shakespeare. Co-opting the great Greeks and cherishing Vergil, that literature has provided questions of eternal significance that mark out a way and a mirror for life that delights as it illustrates.

The soil in which the new civilization was planted was humility, which was only obliquely and incidentally a pagan virtue. "The rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. On the contrary, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant" (Matthew 20:25). In the Gospel of John, the narrative of the Last Supper is displaced by the account of Jesus washing His disciples' feet: "You call me Master and Lord, and you say well for so I am. If, therefore I, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought also to wash the feet of one another. For I have given you an example, that as I have done, so you should do." Power is universally addictive, but in a civilization in which princes wash the feet of beggars on Maundy Thursday and in which a girl who says to God "Be it unto me according to thy word" is loudly proclaimed to be the Mother of God, some other principle haunts the precincts of human pride.

While this new world incorporated the natural virtues of Aristotle and Cicero, its citizens lived with the empowering reality of faith, hope, and charity, gifts given by the Holy Spirit in baptism. Faith, hope, and love made a new world. The legal charter of the new order of the ages was Matthew 5:17, in which the law was made a thing of the heart; its empowering reality was Pentecost. Cicero and Marcus Aurelius gave good advice; Jesus and Saint Paul offered a new life.

Christian civilization reconfigured and continues to moderate the disastrous consequences sin had wrought for the relations between men and women, proposing restraint,

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purity of heart, and imagining marriage as analogous to the relation between Christ and Church. Incidental to this was the formalization of the purpose of marriage (and, hence, of sex) as the procreation of children and their nurture. (One of the specific moral contributions of Judaism which Christianity co-opted was the rejection of homosexuality, which had been variously tolerated or celebrated by the Greeks and Romans.) Along the way childhood was rescued from the dangers in which it always existed in the pre-Christian world. One could not and cannot be callous about babies when the image that complements the Man on the Cross is a woman holding a Child—that Child, the Son of God.

The one civilization teaches regard for the unprotected, the weakest, and the least of these and holds in contempt brutality and hardness of heart. It does not disregard the poor and pander to the rich because they are rich. Wealth is not indicative of moral worth, and may indeed divert the soul from God, and the poor may be directed toward Christ by their neediness. The incompetent, the sick, the disabled are seen as bearing the results of Original Sin for us all and therefore as deserving of the unqualified protection of all.

This is a civilization that teaches gentleness and patience, not rudeness and anger. Saint Paul lists among the effects of the divine charity in human life such virtues as patience and kindness. What it does not promote is envy, pretension, haughtiness, ambition, self-seeking, and irascibility. It rejoices not in evil but in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. The possibility of charity is the ground of the gentle civilization of the Middle Ages and of its present heirs. Courtesy is the child of charity.

This civilization is built not around fear but around hope. Life is all future; this world is a sign of the world that is coming. Every good that exists here points toward the perfection that will be. And death has lost its sting so that life can be an adventure. The Parable of the Talents is about courage and adventure: The third man will not adventure and is therefore cast into outer darkness. If there is a second great civilization it is generically Oriental and is characterized by the drive toward *stasis*, toward keeping things in place. Christianity is loaded toward adventure, which is why it rejects, among other illusory systems, socialism.

Christianity assumes that, beneath and beyond the flaw called Original Sin, life is good, very good. The body is not a prison; history is not an illusion; the soul is not divine. Being is good, said Aristotle; real things must have a real fruition, said Saint Irenaeus, not passing away into nothing but growing toward perfection. Although always threatened by the shadows of evil, the world that has the Eucharist at its center is not chiefly a minefield to be navigated on the way to safe harbor but a sacrament of the New Creation in which the contrapuntal rhythms of sin and disorder are always bathed in God's beckoning love.

Christianity frees mankind from the tyranny of the secular because it frees man from the fear that, in every secular regime, replaces confidence in God's providence with anxiety for tomorrow. It is not easy to find a modern or postmodern regime in which a carefully, if not always consciously, cultivated pusillanimity does not serve as the context for a soft tyranny that promises protection from the pain of life. This is a promise such regimes cannot redeem, or can redeem only in the bogus currency of a fragile secular security that must deny the nobility of the human spirit. Beyond the cross is the resurrection to life. Beyond the government guarantee, nothing. The tendency of the regime, from Augustus to the statists of postmodernity, is to make an ultimate claim to the loyalty of the citizen in the name of self-interest. In the civilization formed by love and self-denial, this claim rings hollow.

How this one great civilization is received by persons is a matter into which social history cannot fruitfully inquire. There are common missteps and misunderstandings that always lurk in the shadows. Having Christianity without Christ will not work. The attempt to alienate the virtues from their transcendent ground, cutting the root while retaining certain effects, will result in a religious atheism that tends to tyranny. Suppressing Christianity into a private religion disengaged from the life of the city is impossible, not because Christianity can triumph culturally but because its witness cannot be kept indoors.

There is, of course, a war on, but it is not the culture war so loudly championed. It is not a war with the ACLU or the academic establishment or the proponents of tyranny, although it is right to contend with such. It is the same war referenced by Saint Paul when he wrote that we contend not with flesh and blood but with spiritual wickedness in high places. The ultimate defeat of these dark powers is assured. The decisive battle was won when God became Man: The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. The sign that the Prophet of Patmos was right is the continuing rage of the Ancient Enemy. He has made an alternative story of creation. Within the halls of great universities he has redefined man as a clever, sex-seeking animal. He has raised up a mighty salvation in worldliness. His prophets Dawkins and Hitchens, like Jeremiahs wandering the streets of Jerusalem, driven

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by the necessity to undeceive, proclaim tirelessly that God does not exist. Great scholars of the Christian text have discovered that the Founder said almost nothing attributed to Him. Histories are rewritten to redefine the only civilization that has ever brought mercy and freedom as the great source of cruelty and slavery. Great numbers of the officers of the Church have been persuaded to the middle way.

But in spite of these unending, desperate demonic efforts, tonight parents will kneel with their children and begin, "Our Father, Who art in Heaven . . . " On the first day of the week, very large numbers of inhabitants of the planet Earth, from Rheims to Patagonia and from Murmansk to the Seychelles, will be reminded that Jesus said, "Take and eat. This is My Body." This will occur with clarity and surpassing beauty in a grand liturgy on the Esquiline in Rome; it will occur in dilute reminiscences of the original in crystal cathedrals and tabernacles of hope. But neither the number nor the style matter as much as the fact. On another day a graduate of some littoral academic establishment, carefully inoculated with a diet of gentle professorial derision against the Galilean superstition, will unaccountably become a Carthusian or a Franciscan. Somewhere someone, the words of Jesus at the edge of awareness, will forgive, love, chose fidelity, have regard for the least, not despair of purity, deny himself, and take up his cross. These actions are the one great civilization. It must be remembered. It may also be seen.

Dr. James Patrick is chancellor of The College of St. Thomas More in Fort Worth, Texas.

Teleology

by Mark Amorose

"Things that lack knowledge do not direct themselves to an end, unless they are directed by something knowing and intelligent . . . "
—*Summa Theologiae* I.2.3

A little fisher crouches waiting where
his net hangs in a sapphire sea of sky:
alert, he waits the heedless passing by
of tiny wing-finned swimmers of the air.
And then the fisher shows a sailor's skill:
he scrambles up his net, as up the shrouds
of some new sailing vessel of the clouds,
to claim his latest catch and make his kill.

Do not begrudge the spider net or line,
nor call this witless creature cruel or bad.
Instead, ask how a witless creature had
the wit to weave with wonderful design;
and see the humble web that nets the fly
reveal the mighty Mind beyond the sky.

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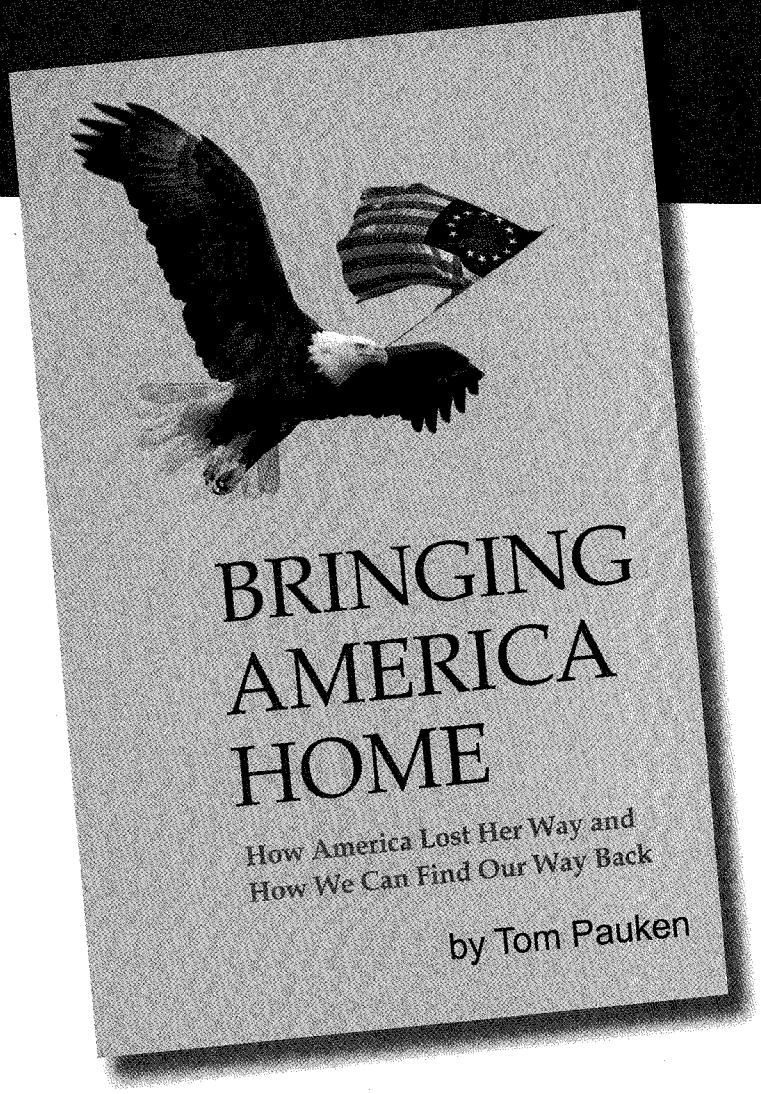

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Tom Pauken, a U.S. military intelligence officer in Vietnam, served on President Ronald Reagan's White House staff. As director of the Action agency, he founded the Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program and implemented Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No to Drugs" campaign.

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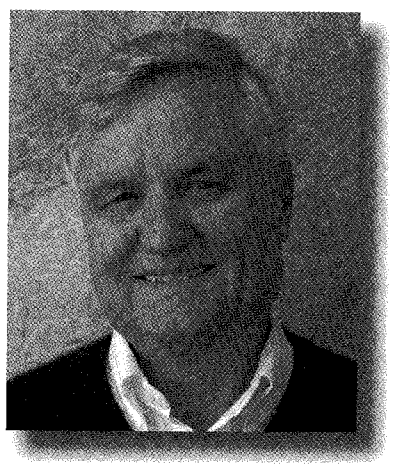

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Why Is the Supreme Court So Slow?

by William J. Quirk

WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG to get a decision from the Supreme Court on the constitutionality of President Obama's healthcare law, or Arizona's SB 170, or California's Proposition 8 limiting "gay marriage"? Currently, those three cases are meandering their way around the lower federal courts. The Obama administration's healthcare law is under attack by 20 states in a federal district court in Florida, as well as by Missouri and Virginia in federal district courts in those states. In time, there will be district-court opinions, then circuit-court opinions, and all of them will get lots of publicity. But the lower-court opinions mean nothing. Ultimately, the Supreme Court will have to take them up and decide them. The issues are simple enough: Can the federal government make you buy something you don't want to buy? Can a state try to get people who are there illegally to leave? Can a state define marriage as something between a man and a woman?

Why do we have to wait years for the Court to speak?

The Framers, in Article III of the Constitution, provide that a state can directly bring an action in the Supreme Court—what the Constitution calls its "original jurisdiction." Article III reads, "In all cases [involving ambassadors] . . . and those in which a State shall be a Party, the Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction." That seems clear English. The Constitution assures ready access to a Supreme Court hearing when a state believes the federal government is exceeding its authority. In his *Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787*, James Madison records that the Constitutional Convention considered and rejected a proposal to give Congress the power to assign any part of the original jurisdiction to lower courts. Alexander Hamilton explained the convention's action in *Federalist* 81: "In cases in which a state might happen to be a party, it would ill suit its dignity to be turned over to an inferior tribunal." The big surprise is that the Supreme Court today doesn't follow the Constitution.

The Constitution provides that in all other cases the Court shall have "appellate" jurisdiction—the power to review lower courts—if Congress so provides. The Court's *original* jurisdiction is its only constitutionally based jurisdiction—the rest all depends on Congress. The Supreme Court, as far as the Framers were concerned, could be limited to cases involving ambassadors and those in which a state is suing the federal government or another state.

In 1801, William Marbury was among the famous "midnight judges" appointed by outgoing Federalist President John Adams. His commission, however, was not delivered before Thomas Jefferson took office. Jefferson ordered James Madison, his secretary of state, to refuse to deliver the commission. Marbury asked the Supreme Court to issue a writ of *mandamus* requiring the secretary of state to deliver the commission. Marbury, of course, was neither an ambassador nor a state, so he was not within the Article III requirements for original jurisdiction. Section 13 of the Judiciary Act of 1789, however, authorized the Court to issue writs of *mandamus*, and, Marbury argued, Congress had thereby broadened the Court's original jurisdiction. Chief Justice John Marshall found that Marbury was entitled to his commission, Madison had wrongfully withheld it, and *mandamus* was the proper remedy. Marbury's rights were violated. But, Marshall ruled, the Court could not help him, as it had no power to order the secretary of state to turn the commission over: Section 13 of the Judiciary Act was unconstitutional because Congress had no power to enlarge or subtract from the Court's constitutionally granted original jurisdiction. Thus, the opinion in *Marbury* v. *Madison* (1803), in which Marshall concludes that,

> If congress remains at liberty to give this court appellate jurisdiction, where the constitution has declared their jurisdiction shall be original; and original jurisdiction where the constitution has declared it shall be appellate; the distribution of jurisdiction, made in the constitution, is form without substance.

Marbury established the Court's power of judicial review—the authority to declare acts of Congress unconstitutional. *Marbury* held that Congress couldn't alter the original jurisdiction of the Court granted by Article III. The 1787 Convention, as noted above, specifically denied Congress any power to alter the Court's original jurisdiction by sending a state to a lower court. Had he access to the notes, Marshall presumably would have cited the convention debate, but Madison did not publish his *Notes of the Debates* until 1840.

Well then, what is going on? Why can't a state bring a case in the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction to test

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healthcare? Or why can't Arizona, when the Justice Department sues it in district court, remove the case to the Supreme Court? The constitutional language is clear, and the holding of the revered *Marbury* case says Article III means what it says. So why are important cases wandering around the district courts and waiting to go to the circuit courts to waste more time? Why can't the country get a reasonably prompt answer to serious questions?

The answer is hard to believe, but here it is: The Court prefers it this way. It asked Congress to exercise a power the Constitutional Convention had expressly denied to Congress—to give the Court the option to refuse to hear a case brought by a state and send it to a lower court. Congress docilely complied, passing Title 28 of the U.S. Code in 1948. Section 1251 ("Original Jurisdiction") provides as follows:

> (a) The Supreme Court shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction of all controversies between two or more States.
>
> (b) The Supreme Court shall have original but not exclusive jurisdiction of:
>
> (1) All actions or proceedings to which ambassadors, other public ministers, consuls, or vice consuls of foreign states are parties;
>
> (2) All controversies between the United States and a State;
>
> (3) All actions or proceedings by a State against the citizens of another State or against aliens.

Practitioners tend to read Section 1251 as requiring them to start actions against the United States in the district courts; for example, the 22 states attacking ObamaCare—who presumably would like a fast decision—are in district courts in Florida, Virginia, and Missouri. The district courts have not yet held a hearing on the merits. The system allows motions to go on forever—motions to dismiss, motions for summary judgment, and so on. Also, Arizona and California have allowed themselves to be sued in district courts when they should be insisting that immigration and "gay marriage" be moved to the original jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. The Court, however, will sometimes take a case if it is brought directly to them—*e.g.*, *Maryland* v. *Louisiana* (1981) and *South Carolina* v. *Baker* (1988). The problem is the Court interprets Section 1251 as giving it the option of taking a case or sending it to a district court. Section 1251 can be read that way, but the Constitution cannot.

Section 1251, in defiance of the Constitution, the 1787 Convention, and *Marbury*, invents two types of original jurisdiction where the Constitution creates only one: one exclusive; the other nonexclusive. Nonexclusive means the case can start elsewhere.

We could make Section 1251 legal if we amended the Constitution. Do we want to do that? Probably not. If a state believes the federal government is going beyond its constitutional authority, the state should get a prompt hearing in the Supreme Court. The policy reasons for a change don't look strong. Some say the additional time the case spends in the lower courts provides insights and properly defines the issue. But the issues seem straightforward, and the Court is qualified to deal with them. Others say the district courts are better designed to develop the facts; the big cases, however, are not fact-dependent, and the Court, in its original jurisdiction, can appoint a special master who can find any necessary facts.

There are lots of policy considerations that support what the Framers gave us. The country deserves a prompt answer to serious constitutional questions. Enforcement of the questionable new healthcare law threatens to strip many workers of their existing coverage. The *New York Times* reported on October 7 that about one million workers, including 30,000 at McDonald's, would have lost their health coverage if the Obama administration had not given waivers exempting certain companies from the terms of the new law. Delayed justice also alters the result. For example, the large expenditures pursuant to the new law create a strong bias in its favor.

When an issue has been around for a long time without being resolved, normal people tend to get tired of it. Does anyone remember or care about the Guantanamo-detainee cases? When the public's patience is exhausted it just wants the issue decided so we can move on.

The Supreme Court does not respect the Constitution when it disregards the plain terms of Article III. Congress should correct Section 1251 to make it conform to Article III. The legislative process is slow because it needs to be—it usually takes time to form a majority. But there's no reason for the judiciary to be slow in deciding questions that need to be answered. The Court has intruded deeply into matters we used to consider legislative. Since it has, the Court should at least become part of the democratic process. Let the Court decide the case; then Congress and the people can decide what they want to do with it.

William J. Quirk is the author of Courts & Congress. *Janek Kazmierski, a 2010 graduate, and Andrew d'Antoni, a law student, gave invaluable assistance in the preparation of this article.*

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Justice Entrapment

WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG, I often explored my grandfather's library, inhaling the musty secrets of tomes not opened for many years. It was on one such visit that I first came upon John Roy Carlson's *Under Cover*.

Published in 1943, Carlson's best-selling book—enticingly subtitled *My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America*—purported to be an exposé of the anti-interventionist movement. Carlson invented a new identity and started publishing a weekly mimeographed hate sheet called the *Christian Defender*, which repeated every antisemitic canard in the most offensive manner possible. Carlson's book quoted obscure cranks and American Nazis as if they represented such leaders of the antiwar America First Committee as John T. Flynn and AFC chairman Gen. Robert E. Wood. The book was relentlessly promoted in the interventionist media, especially by the gossip columnist Walter Winchell.

John Roy Carlson was in the employ of the "Friends of Democracy," a front group for the Communist Party, which was hankering for an American version of the Moscow Trials. The Carlson book was a dress rehearsal for a sedition indictment, and this is exactly what the President had in mind. As Attorney General Francis Biddle put it in his memoirs, FDR "was not much interested in the theory of sedition, or in the constitutional right to criticize the government in wartime. He wanted this antiwar talk stopped." William Power Maloney, a left-wing New York lawyer and ardent New Dealer, was put in charge of the investigation. By the summer of 1942, the first indictment was handed down, naming 28 individuals. A second indictment in January of the following year expanded the scope of the case, naming five more individuals, including some members of Congress, 30 publications, and 26 organizations, among them the America First Committee, the National Committee to Keep America Out of Foreign Wars, the Constitutional Educational League, and a magazine, *Scribner's Commentator*.

A storm of protest from anti-interventionist senators, such as Burton K. Wheeler, forced the Department of Justice to back down, albeit only partially. Biddle took Maloney off the case and issued a third indictment, dropping the mainstream conservative groups, such as the America First Committee, but adding six more individuals, including the prominent African-American intellectual and alleged "fascist" Lawrence Dennis.

At first, the trial was given a lot of coverage by the largely pro-war media: After all, they had played a large part in helping the Justice Department prepare its case. *Washington Post* reporter Dillard Stokes gave the prosecution a handle on the case by writing to the defendants—using a false name—and asking for antiwar pamphlets to be sent to him in Washington, D.C. This gave the government the excuse to prosecute the defendants in Washington, where the "rocket docket" was supposed to make short work of them.

Although the defendants for the most part had never even met each other before the trial, federal prosecutors maintained that the similarity of their ideas made them all part of a conspiracy to undermine the Armed Forces of the United States. Their crime was a thoughtcrime.

We see this same legal theory employed today by Obama's Justice Department, in efforts to go after antiwar activists who recently had their homes and offices raided in Minneapolis and Chicago: Like Attorney General Biddle in the Great Sedition Trial of 1944, Attorney General Holder argues that the exercise of one's First Amendment rights amounts to giving "material support" to "terrorism." In the former case, the "evidence" consisted of the prosecutor reading long boring passages from the defendants' writings, and juxtaposing them with equally long boring citations from official Nazi propaganda.

According to prosecutor John Rogge, the fact that the newspaper of the German American Bund had quoted from the writings of Lawrence Dennis proved that the eccentric and brilliant writer was an agent of Hitler. Judge Edward C. Eicher, a former Democratic congressman, was quite obviously biased against the defendants, whose motions he routinely denied. But he was outnumbered: With 30 different defense lawyers hectoring him at every opportunity, he had great difficulty controlling the courtroom.

After seven months of playing ringmaster, the trial judge suffered a heart attack and died. A mistrial was declared. The government—urged on by the left wing of the Democratic Party—refiled the charges, but they were thrown out on November 22, 1946, by Judge Bolitha Laws of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, who said that to allow the case to continue would be "a travesty of justice."

Today, no travesty is too blatant to be called injustice. Our "Justice" Department has the legal tools to do what FDR failed to accomplish. ◆

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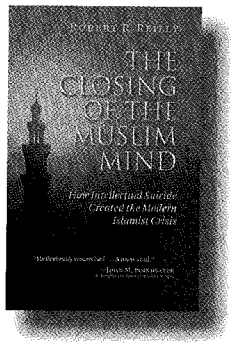

World of War

by Srdja Trifkovic

The Closing of the Muslim Mind: How Intellectual Suicide Created the Modern Islamist Crisis
by Robert R. Reilly
Wilmington, DE: ISI Books
244 pp., $26.95

With the two brief exceptions of Baghdad and Spain over a millennium ago, the history of Islam has been that of a long decline without a fall. What started as a violent creed of invaders from the desert soon ran out of steam, but the collective memory of earlier successes lingered on as proof of divine approval and superiority. It was not until 1683 that the menace to Europe was finally crushed at the gates of Vienna, but for long before that the Islamic world had little interesting to say or do. Not even a prime location at the crossroads of the world could act as an antidote to the slow poison of Islamic obscurantism. The Ottoman interlude concealed and postponed the latent tension between the view of world history as the fulfillment of Islam and its triumph everywhere, on the one hand, and the reality of squalor and decadence, on the other.

The nature of the problem has always been spiritual. When the Ottomans realized that something went seriously wrong two centuries ago, their view of knowledge remained that of a commodity that could be imported and used. Western engineers, military officers, and doctors have been training their Muslim students ever since, but the latter never managed to proceed beyond what had been imparted to them. The problem is insoluble: Muslims want the fruits, but not the culture itself. Western discipline, cohesion, ingenuity, and prosperity are incompatible with instant gratification, inherent to the Muslim mind ever since Muhammad resorted to divine intervention in his lust for his daughter-in-law. There is no creative spark from within that could use foreign novelties to transform the society and catapult it into modernity. As Bernard Lewis notes in *What Went Wrong?* Muslim modernizers concentrated their efforts on three main areas: military, economic, and political.

> The results achieved were, to say the least, disappointing. The quest for victory by updated armies brought a series of humiliating defeats. The quest for prosperity through development brought in some countries impoverished and corrupt economies in recurring need of external aid, in others an unhealthy dependence on a single resource—oil. And even this was discovered, extracted, and put to use by Western ingenuity and industry, and is doomed, sooner or later, to be exhausted, or, more probably, superseded . . . Worst of all are the political results: the long quest for freedom has left a string of shabby tyrannies, ranging from traditional autocracies to dictatorships that are modern only in their apparatus of repression and indoctrination.

In *The Closing of the Muslim Mind*, Robert R. Reilly's objective is not to recapitulate the conventional summary of what went wrong, but to explain why it did. To that end, he explores the theological and philosophical foundations of mainstream Sunnite Islam, as they were developed in the ninth and tenth centuries.

The "intellectual suicide" at the root of the problem, he says, was Islam's "dehellenization" over a millennium ago. The stage was set with the second dynasty of the caliphate, the Abbasids, who ascended to the caliphate in 750, succeeding the Umayyads. They moved the capital to Baghdad, absorbed much of the Syrian and Persian culture, and ushered in a "golden age." Three notable thinkers, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Avicenna, tried to reconcile Aristotle and Neoplatonism with the teaching of Islam. Known as the Mu'tazilite school, they were influenced by Baghdad's Greek heritage in philosophy, which survived the Arab invasion. Some adopted the view that reason is superior to revelation. Farabi even came close to regarding religion as a symbolic rendering of truth and, following Plato, saw it as the task of the philosopher to provide guidance to the state.

Mainstream Mu'tazilites did not go that far, but tried to deploy reason and science in asserting the authority of Islamic scripture. They were rationalists inso-

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far as they fell back on Greek philosophy for their metaphysical and physical explanations of phenomena while staying within the limits of what they regarded as orthodox belief, not unlike the Scholastics in Christendom. They developed an "Islamic theology" able and willing to engage in debates with Christian thinkers. But when the Mu'tazilites went too far in their inquiry into the secrets of nature, they aroused the suspicion of rulers in North Africa and Spain, as well as in the East. By the mid-ninth century a rival school (the Ash'arites) came to dominate Muslim discourse with their insistence that Allah was pure Will, outside and above reason or nature. Natural laws and human thoughts are subsidiary and contingent; Allah is the only actor.

Persecution, exile, and death were soon suffered by the authors whose writings did not conform to the canon. Copyists and booksellers were prohibited from trading in works of the Mu'tazilites. The long process of dehellenization and ossification had begun.

It is said that when the Caliph Umar conquered Alexandria in the seventh century, he had its huge library burned, saying that if the writings contained therein were in agreement with the Koran, they were redundant and therefore useless; and if they disagreed with the holy book, they were blasphemous and must be destroyed. Modern Muslims delight in debunking this apocryphal story as anti-Islamic slander; yet it was not invented by Christians or Jews but by the triumphant Ash'arites to justify the end of critical inquiry, *ijtihad*, as shown in the burning of works by Ibn al-Haitham, who dared claim that the Earth is spherical.

Reilly's chief villain is Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, who asserted that "the science that the Qur'an brings is all science." Islam as we know it has been shaped by his triumph. It rejects the notion that the universe is governed by natural laws, because this would suggest a limitation on the sovereign will of Allah, who cannot be "obliged" to observe any rational order to the universe. No secondary causes are possible, and therefore no relations of cause and effect are operational.

"Creation is not imprinted with reason," Reilly writes of this Islamic voluntarism, and therefore cannot reflect what is not there. There is no rational order invested in the universe upon which one can rely, "only the second-to-second manifestation of God's Will." This is an insight of paramount importance. An orthodox Muslim will see each act in itself as fitting an occasion rather than as a link in a chain of cause and consequence. Accordingly, it is blasphemous to say that combining hydrogen and oxygen makes water: "You are supposed to say that when you bring hydrogen and oxygen together then by the will of Allah water is created." Buying auto insurance or wearing seat belts is presumptuous, unnecessary, and ultimately futile in the face of Allah's sovereign Will. The phrase *Insha'Allah* ("god willing") is not simply a polite social convention, Reilly warns, but the reflection of a theological doctrine that denies reason and any law separate from divine will.

In the last two decades of the 20th century South Korea registered over 16,000 patents, while nine key Middle Eastern countries registered only 370 among them, many of them on inventions by foreigners. Spain, with a population of 36 million, produces a larger proportion of scientific literature than 46 Muslim countries with a billion people. Seven million Greeks translate five times more books annually than the entire Muslim world. Over the past thousand years the entire Arab world has translated as many books as Spain translates in a year. Reilly quotes a Syrian author bewailing the fact that, in the Arab world "from one end to the other[,] there is no true added value to anything."

The victory of the Ash'arites has crippled the Muslim world in every aspect of human endeavor, according to Reilly, and the implications of its continuing stranglehold on the Muslim mind for the future are dire: The West is divorcing reason from faith and sinking into crisis, allowing Islam to continue divorcing faith from reason. The result, he warns, will lead to catastrophe. Reilly concludes that "what Thomas Aquinas did for Christianity, someone needs to do for Islam—if it can be done":

> This will depend on whether or not Ash'arite voluntarism and occasionalism are seen as integral to the Qur'an or as later accretions that can be disregarded . . . The recovery of reason, grounded in Logos, is the only sentinel of sanity. This is imperative of the East as well as the West. "Come now, let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18).

THE CENTRAL PROBLEM with Reilly's analysis is that it underestimates the weight of the moral and intellectual chains imposed on Islam by its founder and his early followers well before the Mu'tazilite attempt to reconcile Allah with *logos* two centuries later. The dictum that commands of Allah, or precedents established by his Prophet, must be obeyed and may not be subjected to rational analysis was firmly in place already at the time of the four "rightly guided caliphs" in Islam's first century. "If it can be done" begs a frank answer, and Reilly is insufficiently attentive to three unpromising facts.

First, the most irrational, violent, and intolerant chapters in the Koran—the "Verse of the Sword" (Sura 9:5), most notably—were "revealed" in Medina, late in Muhammad's life, after the ones potentially amenable to a neo-Thomist treatment, and therefore they abrogate the earlier chapters. Allah's order to "kill the unbelievers wherever you find them" is an injunction, not a suggestion. "When we decide to destroy a population," Allah says, "then we destroy them utterly"

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(17:16-17). Such words are as unamenable to rationalist disambiguation as is the order to "fight those who do not profess the true faith till they pay the jiziya (poll tax) with the hand of humility."

Second, the author underestimates the weight of Muhammad's personal legacy. The problem of Islam lies to a significant extent in the claim of its prophet that his words and acts provide the universally valid standard. The *Hadith*—Muhammad's words and deeds, as supposedly recorded by his contemporaries, which must be obeyed by every true Muslim—contain huge stumbling blocks for a would-be Aquinas in Cairo, Istanbul, or Jeddah. The Koran is to be recited, the prophet of Islam declares, not subjected to analytical study by a reasoning mind: "Whoever so interprets the Quran according to his opinion, let him seek his abode in the fire."

Third, Muhammad invented *jihad* in his lifetime; Islam was spread by *jihad* in its first century, and it has been defined by *jihad* ever since. Islam had developed a doctrine, legal system, and historical practice of mandatory violence against nonbelievers many decades before the Mu'tazilite thinkers were born. Muhammad's early followers, sweeping across the Middle East, North Africa, Iberia, and the subcontinent, adopted bloodshed and terrorism as a divinely ordained method. The Jews of the Old Testament exterminated non-Jews in the name of their God, but they did so on specific commandment against specified enemies. To the Muslim warriors, the command was open-ended from the outset.

Far from being capable of tilting either way until the "closing of the Muslim mind" in the ninth century, Islam was devoid *ab initio* of any reasoned principle of justice or moderation. It was born into the paradigm of a permanent cosmic war, and it thrived on it, true to Muhammad's assurance that Islam is not only the true faith but the only faith with any truth. By the time the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads in 750, Islam was already established as a quasireligious ideology of cultural and political imperialism that absolutizes the conflict with that which is other and knows no natural limits to itself. Thus, the Mu'tazilite attempt to revalidate individual judgment and natural morality was defeated because it ran counter to the orthodox demand for submission to the letter of revealed law, to the precedent of Muhammad, and to the established practice of *jihad*.

IN THE AFTERMATH of the July 2005 London bombings, Salman Rushdie called for a "reform movement to bring the core concepts of Islam into the modern age." In terms of doctrine, he wrote,

> reformed Islam would reject conservative dogmatism and accept that, among other things, women are fully equal to men; that people of other religions, and of no religion, are not inferior to Muslims . . . and that the repression of free speech . . . must be replaced by genuine, robust, anything-goes debate in which there are no forbidden ideas or no-go areas.

It has been tried before. A few self-professed Muslims have been seeking a more rational variety of their faith for over a century. As Clement Huart pointed out in 1907, however,

> until the newer conceptions, as to what the Koran teaches as to the duty of the believer towards non-believers, have spread further and have more generally leavened the mass of Moslem belief and opinion, it is the older and orthodox standpoint on this question which must be regarded by non-Moslems as representing Mohammedan teaching and as guiding Mohammedan action.

Huart could have said the same of those Mu'tazilites who created new words in Arabic to take in Greek concepts; who cherished "the spirit of free inquiry and speculative thought" about the nature of God, the universe, and humanity's place within it; who advocated free will over determinism; who felt free to interpret revelation; and who insisted that the Koran was created in time. They belong to Islam as much as Voltaire belongs to Christianity.

The willingness of a few to risk condemnation (or worse) by rejecting the irrational and stifling tenets of historical Islam may be laudable, but it will do nothing to modify Islam as a doctrine. As Sir William Muir noted, a redirected Islam that should attempt by rationalistic selection or abatement to effect a reform would no longer be Islam. For the majority of Muslims, any such attempt is considered as heretical today as it was in al-Ghazali's time.

The Ash'arites did not "distort" Islam; the neo-Hellenists did. Islam, in Muhammad's revelations, traditions, and their codification and historical practice, breeds a peculiar mind-set, the one against which Burke warned when he wrote that "intemperate minds never can be free; their passions forge their fetters." A comprehensive and explicit neo-Islamic revisionism capable of growing popular roots may be possible, but in his otherwise excellent book Robert Reilly only hints at why it is not likely. This sin of omission is forgivable in an author who is, and wants to remain, "mainstream."

Although the author of *The Closing of the Muslim Mind* stops short of spelling this out, his book is a cogent plea for our vigilance against the irrational and obscurantist world of Islam, and for keeping its captives away from "the world of war" that they seek to conquer or destroy.

Srdja Trifkovic is Chronicles' *foreign-affairs editor.*

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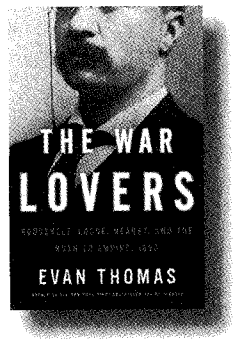

Happy Warriors

by Justin Raimondo

The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898
by Evan Thomas
New York: Little, Brown & Company
480 pp., $29.99

Readers of *The War Lovers*, a fascinating account of the dawn of America's imperial age by *Newsweek* reporter Evan Thomas, are bound to feel a twinge of *déjà vu* as they put down the book. Focusing on three men—Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and William Randolph Hearst—Thomas shows how they collaborated to usher in America's age of empire. Revolving each around the other like spiders spinning interlocking webs, they ensnared a nation in their shared delusion, occasioning a bout of mass hysteria that culminated in the Spanish-American War.

No three men were more dissimilar. Roosevelt hated Hearst, considered him the very height of vulgarity, and routinely denied making comments attributed to him in the Hearst press, yet they were brothers in spirit, fellow ideologues committed not only to war with Spain but to an explicitly imperialist doctrine promulgated by a man very unlike either the bombastic Roosevelt or the uniquely eccentric Hearst. Lodge, a fastidious and studied patrician, was nervous and prone to melancholia. While Hearst was the publicist and Teddy the politician, the Waspish Lodge was the theoretician.

Lodge was widely disliked in the elite Boston circles from which he sprang. The Boston Brahmins, stalwart anti-imperialists, gave rise to the Anti-Imperialist League led by Edward Atkinson and his fellow New England "mugwumps"—the primary opposition to the expansionist policies advanced by the Lodge-Roosevelt-Hearst troika.

The anti-imperialists were mostly libertarians who believed—or, rather, foresaw—that the acquisition of an overseas empire would irrevocably change the character and complexion of the nation and lead to the abolition of our republican form of government. Lodge, however, was made of sterner stuff: He extolled war as an end in itself, a means to moral and cultural revitalization, a kind of tonic that had to be imbibed periodically in order to keep the nation in good health. As a member of the House, and then as a senator, his hobbyhorse was what he and his supporters called "the Large Policy."

As Thomas describes it, Lodge "wanted to sprinkle the globe with American territorial possessions that would protect and open up trade." In other words, he wanted mercantilism, a foreign policy run by and for investment bankers and their corporate vassals. You've heard of Lenin's theory of imperialism, of course—that capitalism means constant warfare as a result of competition for overseas markets—but what you've probably not heard is that the Marxists got their theory from the "progressives" associated with Teddy's brain trust. As Murray Rothbard pointed out in *A History of Money and Banking in the United States*,

> By the late 1890s, groups of theoreticians in the United States were working on what would later be called the "Leninist" theory of capitalist imperialism. The theory was originated, not by Lenin but by advocates of imperialism, centering around [*sic*] such Morgan oriented friends and brain trusters of Theodore Roosevelt as Henry Adams, Brooks Adams, Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, and Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge.

According to these early theoreticians of American imperialism,

> the ever lower rate of profit from the "surplus capital" was in danger of crippling capitalism, except that salvation loomed in the form of foreign markets and especially foreign investments. . . . Hence, to save advanced capitalism, it was necessary for Western governments to engage in outright imperialist or neo-imperialist ventures, which would force other countries to open their markets for American products and would force open investment opportunities abroad.

Feeding into this fear of impending de-

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cline were other notions, such as that given expression by Frederick Jackson Turner, a young college professor, in a speech to the American Historical Association called "The Frontier in American History." With no more land to conquer and settle, Professor Turner averred, the race would fall into an inevitable senescence, spiritual as well as economic.

This fear permeated the circles in which Roosevelt and Lodge traveled. Roosevelt tried to alleviate it by becoming a caricature of the insecure male with something to prove. His obsession with actually getting into the fighting, as war with Spain loomed large, reveals a man clearly not at home with himself: The psychological roots of his bloodlust give off more than a whiff of Kraft-Ebbing. Weak and girlish as a child, as a man he "yearned for conflict," writes Thomas, "the ultimate conflict of war." Here was someone clearly out to prove the unprovable—with disastrous consequences for the nation.

Lodge's bloodlust was more intellectualized, yet no less strident: If Teddy, embodying the bluster and braggadocio of early 20th-century American nationalism, was the Mussolini of the movement, Lodge was its Lenin. He was prepared to grasp any idea that advanced his concept of America as an emerging empire, particularly the theories of Adm. Alfred Thayer Machan, whose *Influence of Sea Power on History* was the key text of the expansionist canon. Machan's book caused a sensation when it came out, receiving accolades not only from the Roosevelt brain trusters but from Kaiser Wilhelm, who declared he was "trying to learn it by heart."

Machan's thesis was simple: Sea power is the key to military dominance. He took as his prime example the British Empire, a vast domain that extended its trade routes—by force—around the globe. Utilizing the crudest sort of Social Darwinism then in vogue, Machan raised the banner of the Anglo-Saxon race as the savior and civilizer of mankind: *Via* sea power, the Anglo-Saxons would fan out across the Pacific and into the Indian Ocean, carrying with them the Anglo-Saxon seed. It was manifest destiny with a naval twist.

Lodge helped Roosevelt to get appointed assistant secretary of the Navy. Along with their faction in Congress, they pushed for a massive military buildup, with special emphasis on maritime "preparedness." What they were preparing for was war with Spain, and they got it—with the invaluable assistance of the third member of the warmongering trio, Hearst.

The legendary newspaper publisher was an odd character, antisocial and introverted. His singular talent as a vulgarizer and spinner of tall tales masked yet another twisted psychological tangle of displaced passions and pathology masquerading as ideology. He was the pioneer in the art of journalism-as-narrative, which is not so much about reporting the news as it is creating a story line that simultaneously arouses the masses and serves some ulterior purpose.

Except, in Hearst's case, there was nothing ulterior about his designs on the Spanish in Cuba: He wanted them out, and the United States in. When a rebel Cuban spy, who just happened to be an attractive lady, was arrested by the occupation authorities, he hired a young adventurer to rescue her from prison, a task made easy by generous bribes, although no mention of this was made in the account published in Hearst's *New York Journal*. Instead, a fanciful tale of derring-do was invented, complete with drawings splashed across the front page of the damsel being abused by leering Spaniards. When the USS *Maine* went down, Hearst was truly in his element and—not for the first time—inspired to make up the news rather than report it. Hearst's newspapers claimed that a torpedo hole was found in the hull of the *Maine*—a lie—and headlines screamed for American revenge. His editorial writers lambasted President McKinley for failing to rise to the occasion with sufficient bellicosity: The President was a "coward" who was "on his knees" before the Spanish. The speaker of the house, doughty old Thomas Bracket Reed, was "pro-Spanish" because he opposed the rush to war. If Hearst were alive today, his newspapers would be reporting that Saddam's "weapons of mass destruction" had somehow found their way into Iran, and only the faintheartedness of naysaying pacifists is preventing us from blowing them to smithereens.

Our road to empire was carpeted with corpses, and it wasn't long before the peoples we pledged to uplift turned on us with a righteous vengeance. The practice of waterboarding was first introduced into the U.S. military not in Iraq or Afghanistan, but in the course of the U.S. occupation of the Philippines, the prize Roosevelt had his eye on from the very beginning. This was the first living laboratory in which the "progressive" theorists and international do-gooders who rallied to Roosevelt's cause got to commit atrocities in the name of liberation and in the interest of social experimentation.

In the foreign-policy realm, their contemporary heirs are the neoconservatives, whose wars of liberation in Iraq and Afghanistan are rationalized in terms Senator Lodge and his cabal would find familiar. What was Lodge's enthusiasm for national vitalism through constant war but an earlier version of the neocons' "national greatness"? We can learn from the history of the War Party in this country only if we know it. Evan Thomas has performed a worthy service in presenting it in a new light.

Justin Raimondo is editorial director of Antiwar.com.

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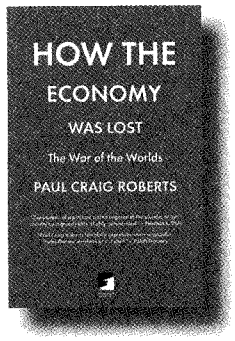

Back to Hamilton

by William J. Quirk

How the Economy Was Lost: The War of the Worlds
by Paul Craig Roberts
Oakland, CA: AK Press
288 pp., $15.95

THE CREDIT BUBBLE, which exploded in September 2008, exposed the fact that the U.S. economy has been devastated by globalism. Unemployment numbers—effectively close to 20 percent, about 25 million out of a workforce of 120 million—are near Depression levels. The figures have not moved despite the Bush and Obama administrations' policy of borrowing and printing money to defeat deflation.

The Federal Reserve, led by Ben Bernanke, views the economy in abstract terms. Bernanke entitled his 2002 speech to the National Economists Club "Deflation: Making Sure 'It' Doesn't Happen Here." Deflation, or falling prices, Bernanke found, "can be highly destructive to a modern economy and should be strongly resisted." The cause of deflation, he continued, is not a mystery—it is a collapse of aggregate demand, a drop in spending so severe that producers must cut prices to find buyers. The U.S. price level fell ten percent each year from 1930 to 1933. The two main troubles with deflation, according to Bernanke, are that it discourages borrowing, since the borrower must repay in more valuable dollars than those he borrowed, raising the real interest rate by the amount of deflation; and that existing debtors have to repay their debts in more valuable dollars.

Should the government encourage borrowing and debtor relief? An alternative approach would be to say that a little deflation now and then is necessary to maintain price stability over time. Prices were stable from the American Revolution until President Nixon took the country off its last tie to the gold standard in 1971. Prices have ballooned at least ten times since then—a 75-cent shrimp cocktail costs $10; a $100,000 townhouse costs at least $1 million; a $20,000 house sells today for $200,000; a person earning $16,000 then probably earns $160,000 today, if he has stayed even. Of course, the only reason for creating the Federal Reserve in 1913 was to insulate the control of money from politicians. Politicians, it was reasonably argued, would print money to absorb any bump in the road. (The German inflation of 1923 is a good example.) But the past 40 years make clear that the discipline of the gold standard was more effective than that imposed by the supposedly independent Fed.

Did the United States face a deflationary threat in 2002? Bernanke said it was "remote" and reassured us that a "variety of policy responses are available should deflation appear." What are they? What is Bernanke's game plan?

The Federal Reserve, he said, will first reduce short-term interest rates to zero—punishing saving and encouraging borrowing and spending. If prices keep falling, Bernanke said, the government will just print money. Paper money has value only to the extent that supply is strictly limited. "But the US government has a technology, called a printing press (or today, its electronic equivalent) that allows it to produce as many US dollars as it wishes at essentially no cost." Bernanke concludes,

> Indeed, under a fiat (that is paper) money system, a government (in practice, the central bank in cooperation with other agencies) should always be able to generate increased nominal spending and inflation, even when the short-term nominal interest rate is at zero.

The Federal Reserve has been at it for a year and a half; they have lent two trillion dollars to our major financial institutions at zero or near-zero rates. Unemployment remains very high.

In his fascinating book, *How the Economy Was Lost*, Paul Craig Roberts, an assistant secretary of the Treasury under President Reagan, explains why financial manipulation will not help: There is no economy to revive. Mr. Roberts notes former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan's unconcern with America's loss of manufacturing; Greenspan said there was a beneficial shift from "old" manufacturing (steel, cars, textiles) to "new" manufacturing (computers and telecommunications). But computer and telecommunications manufacturing was also quickly outsourced. Not only did the old manufacturing jobs—those that provided a decent middle-class liv-

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ing—disappear; so did the engineering and research that supported them. The "new economy" never showed up. America's college graduates today compete for the "new" service jobs—bartending and waitressing. Roberts disputes the "new economy" talk: "Corporations offshore their production, because they can more cheaply produce abroad what they sell to Americans." Shorn of industry, the United States will soon be a Third World country: Outsourcing, he argues, is a greater threat than terrorism.

"Free trade" and "globalization" are "the guises behind which class war is being conducted against the middle class by both political parties." Pat Buchanan "put it well," Roberts writes,

> when he wrote that NAFTA and the various so-called trade agreements were never trade deals, they were enabling acts that enabled U.S. corporations to dump their American workers, avoid Social Security taxes, healthcare, and pensions and move their manufacturer offshore.

Globalism benefits capital at the expense of American workers. The middle-class standard of living has not increased since the 1970's. Median income for males in their prime earning years more than doubled from 1947 to 1973—from $22,606 to $50,553. We have seen a sharp drop since 1998—from $52,727 to $45,540 in 2008.

Since 1970, private-industry wages and salaries as a share of income have dropped from 50 percent to 42.4 percent, the lowest in history. Government benefits over the same period have risen from 10 percent to 17.2 percent, the highest in history.

Disparity of income has greatly increased. Adjusted for inflation, household income for the bottom 60 percent of the population—those earning under $50,000—has not moved since 1967. At the same time, the top five percent have doubled their income from $150,000 to $300,000. America's middle class is fading.

Roberts summarizes our present position in dire terms:

> A country that gives away its productive capability and becomes dependent on foreign creditors to finance its budget and trade deficits is a country that has problems beyond the reach of monetary and fiscal policies. . . . The U.S. has been financing its trade and budget deficits by turning over the ownership of existing U.S. assets and their income streams to foreigners and by foreigners recycling their trade surplus dollars into the purchase of new U.S. Treasury debt. This dependence on foreign creditors now constrains U.S. monetary and fiscal policy.

British imperial policy, which prohibited the colonies from manufacturing, was a major cause of the American Revolution. The British intended to keep the colonies as suppliers of raw material for British manufacturing. Jefferson addressed his *Summary View of the Rights of British America* to George III. Parliament's acts, he pointed out to the king, "prohibit us from manufacturing for our own use the articles we raise on our own lands with our own labor." The American

> is forbidden to make a hat for himself of the fur which he has taken perhaps on his own soil. An instance of despotism to which no parallel can be produced in the most arbitrary ages of British history.

Another act of Parliament forbade the manufacture of iron and "heavy as that article is, and necessary in every branch of husbandry, besides commission and insurance, we are to pay freight for it to Great Britain, and freight for it back again, for the purpose of supporting not men, but machines, in the island of Great Britain." Jefferson admonished the king, "Let not the name of George the third be a blot in the page of the history." The king failed to take Jefferson's advice.

Once we got rid of the king, how could we get the economy going? We had no manufacturing, and the European countries pursued mercantilist policies that would not give U.S. producers a break. Alexander Hamilton came up with the solution: temporary protection for America's manufacturers. He begins his *Report on Manufactures* (1791) by laying out the Jeffersonian arguments against his position. The Jeffersonians objected to using government to encourage manufacturing; it should not interfere with the "natural current of industry." It "can hardly ever be wise in a government to attempt to give a direction to the industry of its citizens." And, of course, tariffs taxed consumers and handed monopoly profits to producers.

Hamilton recognized the power of these arguments, but he disagreed for two reasons: The country could ill afford to be caught shorthanded in arms in case of war, and the "net produce of capital engaged in manufacturing enterprise is greater" than that employed in agriculture.

Hamilton's reasons still hold. We need, for a time, to create an artificial market by use of tariffs and limits on exporting capital. We have to end what Paul Craig Roberts rightly calls the "class war" of capital against the American middle class. A Third World country—with terrible inequalities of income—is not the experiment in self-rule the founders fought for.

Contributing editor William J. Quirk is the author of Courts & Congress. *Janek Kazmierski, a 2010 graduate, and Andrew D'Antoni, a law student, gave invaluable assistance in the preparation of this review.*

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Joe Sobran as I Knew Him

I MET JOE SOBRAN in 1973 when I was working as history editor at St. Martin's Press and had begun writing for *National Review*. I don't remember how exactly, but the occasion must have been one of the open-house cocktail parties at the magazine's offices at 150 East 35th Street, held every other Wednesday evening after the current number had been seen off to the printer in Bridgeport, Connecticut. St. Martin's is established in the Flatiron Building at Fifth Avenue and 23rd Street, a short walk across midtown New York to Number One Fifty. However our meeting occurred, it was the beginning of many years of regular lunches and dinners in the company of Joe. We were often joined at these by Timothy Dickinson, an Englishman who had been at Oxford with George Will before coming to New York, where he was then established as a walking, breathing, resident encyclopedia for Lewis Lapham, the editor of *Harper's*.

In those days Joe was living in Ypsilanti, Michigan, with his four children and commuting to Manhattan by plane on alternating weeks. Despite his growing fame he was not rolling in money, and hotels in New York were, then as now, absurdly expensive. On the weeks when he was in town, Joe's bed was the conference table in the library, where he would stretch on his back at night, staring up at the reflected pattern of car lights on East 34th Street passing across the ceiling and fenced in on three sides by the collected works of Whittaker Chambers, Edmund Burke, and James Burnham, among others. He brought a kit bag with him on the plane and set out the contents along the top of a low bookcase: razor, deodorant, toothbrush, and toothpaste. Having knocked off work at St. Martin's, I would arrive at the magazine at a little past five; afterward, Joe and I would walk around the corner to a Mexican restaurant on Third Avenue. He almost invariably ordered *enchiladas suizas*, a dish his nutritionist (had he had one) would certainly not have recommended for him. We would talk and drink until about nine, and then I would walk him round to the office and see him upstairs to say good night. It was between then and two or three in the morning that he composed his brilliant essays for the *Human Life Review*, whose offices were on the top floor of the building. Joe usually had a few words to say concerning the points he wished to make in his contemplated article, but I was not a Catholic (or anything else) in those days, and so these musings were largely lost on me. I can recall remarking on one occasion that sleeping with a woman is like drinking a bottle of wine. Joe, who at the time had lapsed in the practice of his Faith, was so concerned that he insisted on rushing me around to the Fireside Tavern on Lexington Avenue to buy me a drink and set me straight on the principles of Catholic sexual morality.

One evening in November 1975 Joe phoned to say that he had recommended me to Bill Buckley as the replacement for George Will, who had been lured away by *Newsweek* from his job as NR's Washington editor and director of the book-reviews department. Here is how it had happened. John Lukacs, the historian—an acquaintance of Bill Buckley's but at the time unknown to me—had remarked overgenerously, in a phone conversation with Bill, on the quality of the book reviews I had been contributing to the magazine. Bill quoted him in the editorial meeting next day, and Joe put two and two together. *National Review* was in search of a new books editor. Chilton Williamson was a publishing-house editor, and a frequent contributor to the book section. Why not . . . ? The day after Thanksgiving, Bill phoned me at home and offered me the job.

I was given Whittaker Chambers' old office on the third floor, around the corner from the library and down the hall from the office of the editor-in-chief, where I sat facing a long, grimy window and pounding on one of the old Underwood manuals that were general issue at NR at the time. Mostly, I was left to work undisturbed, save by the coming and going of Bill Buckley and his chauffeur toting bulging leather attaché cases along the narrow hall, and the sharp voice of Frances Bronson, Bill's fearsome (though not to the staff) secretary, giving someone thousands of miles away hell from her office around the corner. On magazine week, though, there were interruptions—generally by Joe, who would appear in my door with a sheet of yellow copy paper in his hand, wishing to share with me the deathless draft of the editorial paragraph he had just composed. I would comment, usually enthusiastically, and Joe, smiling broadly, would vanish. In a quarter of an hour he would be back, proudly bearing the second draft and eager to introduce me to the improvements he had made in his small masterpiece. Depending on the length of the paragraph in question, this could go on for quite a long time. Eventually, Bill hired another hand (was it Rick Brookhiser?) and stuck

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him into the old Chambers office, and Priscilla Buckley (the managing editor) had me transferred down to the second floor, where I shared an office with the articles editor, Kevin Lynch. Joe's office, too, was on the second floor, and, since he and Kevin were close friends, I saw even more of him after that. I can't remember whether Joe ever accepted our suggestions for revision. In fact, I don't recall that we ever made any.

A year or two after I was hired as books editor, the senior editors, assembled in one of their fearful biannual "Agonies" following dinner at the Buckley maisonette at 73 East 73rd Street, transferred Joe's responsibilities as section manager of *Arts & Manners* to me. Joe was hugely relieved; I got a raise; but very soon after I found it necessary to appeal to the editor-in-chief to prevail personally upon Joe's sense of responsibility as his column deadline for the new *Books, Arts & Manners* approached. The problem was resolved—more or less—by Bill's threat to withhold Joe's biweekly paycheck until he had assurance from me that Sobran copy had been delivered to my desk. A further problem proved to be less tractable. Joe's former protégés took what seemed to me an unconscionably long time to fix it in their heads that Williamson was now the arts and manners wallah, not Sobran. For months or years after the transfer of power, contributors continued to direct their brief exercises in genius to M.J. Sobran. Their lack of attention was nothing to Joe, but for Linda Bridges, the managing editor, and me it meant a janitorial nightmare. Joe's office on the second floor was hardly larger than a closet—a stuffed closet. The bookshelves had overflowed years before, and books, newspapers, and magazines lay piled in sloping slippery stacks on the linoleum floor, among the saucepans and canned goods from which Joe made his supper, when he wasn't dining out, in the kitchenette off the library. A precarious, whale-backed mass of newspaper cuttings, ignored letters, and unopened manuscripts covered the desk entirely. On one off week, Linda and I—in search of a manuscript a contributor in good standing with the magazine, but clearly inattentive to bureaucratic change, was ready to swear on his mother's coffin he had mailed six months before to Mr. Sobran at *Arts & Manners*—were compelled to bulldoze the formidable mound. Joe's office had a window (it hadn't been raised for decades), looking out onto an air shaft. Beneath the window Linda and I noticed a biggish hole in the plaster below the sill, exposing the bricking beneath and about the size a very large badger would make. We concluded, after consideration, that Joe must have been trying to "exscape" (Flannery O'Connor's spelling) one evening, and had not succeeded in doing so. We never did locate the missing manuscript; and I was compelled to write a letter of apology to the author, excusing myself by explaining that the floor of Mr. Sobran's office had collapsed into the basement and all of his correspondence had been lost amid the rubble.

Joe was an amusement around the office on his trips to town, but he could also be a distraction—a major one, in fact. Once relieved of his administrative responsibilities, he had nothing to do during his three days in New York but write his assigned editorial paragraphs and more lengthy multiparagraph editorials, deposit them in the dumbwaiter going up to Bill's office, and attend the Tuesday editorial lunch at Paoni's and drinks and dinner at East 73rd Street that evening. At other times during the day, when not writing his editorials, he would venture out on errands in the neighborhood from which he would return hauling the dirty canvas tote bag he carried instead of a briefcase, stuffed with the latest numbers of *Time* and *Newsweek*, the afternoon editions of the *New York Post* and the *Daily News*, the *Enquirer*, the secondhand books he had picked up somewhere, and a stash of candy bars to hold him on the flight back to Ypsilanti. Beaming with satisfaction, he'd appear in Kevin's and my office, his tie pulled down from his collar and his soiled shirt bulging from the pale green polyester jacket he favored. "Kev!" he would begin; and Kevin and I, putting in a little hard labor over our respective magazine departments, knew we were in for it. So we relaxed, pushed back from our desks, and enjoyed his company. Joe was always full of some particular enthusiasm, usually lasting for weeks, sometimes months. In the early 80's, one of these enthusiasms was Pope John Paul II, who had been elected to the papacy in 1979. Joe had recently returned to the Faith, and on those days when he was in a particularly popish mood he'd present himself before us carrying a Catholic Bible or missal and swooning over John Paul. "My Pope!" he would exclaim, raising his eyes to the ceiling. "My Pope!" A second enthusiasm, ultimately much more than that (it ended in Joe's second marriage), was Jeanne Wacker, a highly intelligent woman with a degree in philosophy who had been a student of James Burnham at New York University. (Jim claimed that she had been his best student.) The two had met at a regular salon conducted at the home of John Murray Cuddihy, the sociologist and author of *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Lévi-Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle With Modernity*. Jeanne was a native of Ogden, Utah, and she was old enough to be Joe's mother, though she didn't look it. There was a story around the office at the time that Joe had confided to Jack Cuddihy his desire to be married again, and Jack suggested, doubtless with a Celtic twinkle in his eye, "Why not Jeanne?" I don't recall how long it took him to propose—and be accepted—but for many months Kevin and I listened, sympathetically but with one ear only, while Joe made cow eyes at the ceiling and mooned on about Jeanne's many virtues. After their marriage (or perhaps before) she took a job as an editorial assistant at *National Review*. This was, in fact, a

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secondary job, her chief responsibility being to look after Joe and put his life in order. She began by taking charge of his finances and getting him off the hook with the IRS, on whose point he had been impaled, squirming, for several years.

Both Joe and I were extremely fond of Timothy Dickinson, the Oxford man. Timothy knew more than most encyclopedists have forgotten, but that was not what you first noticed about him. Week in and week out, he dressed in a morning coat possessed of its own peculiar elegance, but not of the sort that would have brought Bertie Wooster's friends at the Drones Club flocking to learn the name of his tailor. The waistcoat was spotted, the trousers fell short of the ankles, and Timothy's socks were usually falling over the tops of his shoes. He wore a monocle and a (more or less) fresh boutonniere and invariably carried a walking stick that ended in a bare protruding screw from which the head of the stick was missing. Timothy was (I hope he still is) one of the most charming men I have ever known, and lunch with him and Joe (as well as, now and then, Tom Wolfe) was an occasion straight out of an English literary memoir dating from about the period of Ronald Firbank. I shall never forget the afternoon when Timothy, standing with me on the sidewalk outside the Lebanese restaurant where we had lunched with Wolfe, dropped his cane on the pavement and got down on all fours to retrieve it, scrambling blindly at the feet of the tall, impeccably white-suited figure of the author of *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. I don't remember whether Joe was present for the occasion; if not, his superb sense of humor would have known what to make of it. I do know that he was along when, returning together from lunch at Paoni's, the three of us breasting the hill side by side, Timothy was hailed by Linda Bridges following behind on East 35th Street. "Oh, my dear Linda!" Timothy exclaimed, turning round in his tracks. "You do have the most remarkable ability to recognize people from behind!"

In 1981 I moved to Wyoming. I saw much less of Joe after that, since I was in town for only a few days each month and had many other old friends to see and catch up with when I visited. After his marriage to Jeanne, Joe moved to Princeton, where his wife owned a house. Ordinarily, he took the train from New Jersey to Midtown Manhattan, but on occasion he made the trip by car. Late one afternoon, looking down through my office window onto 35th Street, I saw his battered and faded van parked at the curb, directly in front of the building. Having something to say to Joe, I hurried downstairs and into the street. Joe was not behind the wheel, or anywhere else. The van was a long way from empty, though. Every seat except the driver's was piled with books, magazines, newspapers, and cassette tapes of Bach's and Mozart's music, also recordings of the George Carlin performances of which Joe was always a big fan. There were books on the floorboards, front and back, paperback volumes of Shakespeare's plays had been jammed between the dashboard and the windshield, and half-smoked cigars protruded from the ashtray. Joe's means of transportation was a bookmobile. Rather, it was a Joemobile.

I had intended to ask him for a lift as far as Grand Central Station. Instead, I went back upstairs, packed a heavy briefcase, and set off on foot for the nearest subway entrance. ◆

To the Grand Canyon

by Mark Amorose

Time's massive monument in weathered stone,
chronicle of the ages of creation,
you silence tongue and stun imagination:
your spectator seems doomed to feel alone.
And in that quietude of isolation
the tininess of all he calls his own
(his insignificance of flesh and bone)
can tempt him to the edge of desperation.

But I defy your mute intimidation,
for I can count your thousand cubic miles,
which you, for all your bulk, can't comprehend.
Nor can you know my final consolation:
when your enormous ruin lies in piles,
my mind will loom for ages without end.

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Prosperity

by Clyde Wilson

DECLINING PROSPERITY is now a settled fact of American life.

Prosperity is not measured by the day's average of stock speculation, or the profits of bankers, or the munificence of government subsidies and salaries, or the consumption of luxury goods, or even by the Gross Domestic Product. It is amazing how in a few short decades American "educators," "experts," "journalists," and "statesmen" have banished age-old truths from public discourse.

Prosperity is when the great bulk of families have some property and a secure source of living, large or small. When nearly everybody has an abundance of necessities and access to some small luxuries and leisure. Naturally, debt, the ancient nemesis of prosperity, is minimal and temporary in a prosperous society for both government and people—it is a device for emergencies or starting up promising ventures. A prosperous society is made up mostly of people of middling economic status, with relatively few very rich and very poor. The government apparatus is small, unobtrusive, and mainly local. Religion, charity, education, and the arts flourish, especially where there is cultural cohesion, through private patronage. (Cultural cohesion would seem to be typical of societies with widely shared prosperity.)

Americans have been too pretentious in touting our country as *the* land of opportunity. However, it is true that America has been *a* land of opportunity. Not always, of course. There have been stretches of history when it was not true, the most recent of which is now. But as a general proposition "land of opportunity" has had a good deal of accuracy. America has been with some justice thought of as a land where ability and effort counted more than inherited status, where people could expect to be more prosperous than the previous generations, where, sometimes, the sky was the limit for the enterprising and gifted. A land that was very good, compared with the Europe left behind, for the common man. Frederick Jackson Turner thought that this was because of the great excess of unexploited resources over population, a condition which, he pointed out at the end of the 19th century, was coming to an end.

If I have drawn a proper description of prosperity, there cannot be much disagreement about my opening proposition of decline. A vague sense of this decline is what motivates the people who are joining Tea Parties. When I was a college undergraduate a half-century ago, a professor asked a large class for a show of hands: Who expected to be more prosperous than his parents? There was at least an 85-percent affirmative response rate. I doubt if it would be 20 percent today—even less among native white Americans. Unemployment or underemployment is now the settled lot of millions of people who once would have been solid members of the middle class—even among the skilled and highly skilled. The young remain dependent longer than they used to on the older generation, who were able to accumulate some wealth in better times. Meanwhile, the rich have reached levels of wealth unprecedented in human history and which in themselves are irrefutable proofs of social ill health.

Starting and operating one's own business in America has never been more difficult and less promising than now. You can be sure that that optimistic 20 percent of young folks are not thinking in traditional terms about hard work leading to success. They are thinking that they are smart enough to get a cut of the going racket. Some of them will be disappointed. And millions of hard-working Americans live on a dangerously small margin of survival. Millions more live off the books in an all-cash economy.

The belief that merit leads to appropriate reward has always been only a partial truth. It does not make allowance for such important considerations as native endowment, luck, circumstances, and connections, and that human beings are more complicated (and more valuable) than mere units of labor. But there has been enough truth in the proposition to serve as an essential factor of social morale. The connection between merit and reward has been largely abolished in American society today, and most people do not believe in it anymore. How, after all, did Michelle Obama, who twice failed the bar exam, merit a quarter-million-dollar salary? And that is only one of countless examples.

The consequences of this loss of social morale could in the long run be more serious than a revolution or world war.

And this, at a time when the eternal global superiority of the American way is proclaimed by presidents and pundits (with incredible ignorance and short-sightedness).

The public discourse (and the "professional" discourse, too) on economics is cursed by the natural proclivity to treat sequences as consequences. If B follows A, then A was the cause of B. In fact, in understanding the wealth of nations, that is a bad assumption—because there are always multiple variables, some of them unknown, unpredictable, too deep to be observed, and even spiritual and unmeasurable.

But this natural tendency is invaluable to politicians (and "experts"). It al-

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lows for endless obfuscation of real issues and avoidance of honest analysis and debate—which, indeed, is the purpose of American public discourse. Bad B follows my opponent's bad A, while good B follows upon my good A. The politicians, of course, don't care whether the description is true or beneficial, only whether it is advantageous to themselves. That is the difference between a politician and a statesman, an extinct species, the last doubtful sighting of a live example occurring over half a century ago.

Studying the economic conflicts of earlier American history has convinced me that public discourse has almost always been carried on in deceptive party polemics and has seldom touched the root issues. Whether there should be a Federal Reserve or not is not the proper question. The Federal Reserve was merely a centralization of a power over money that the federal government under Lincoln had already given away to the bankers long before. The real question is: Who, if anyone, has the right to expand and contract the money supply? All the blather about tariffs and free trade likewise misses the point. There never has been such a thing as pure free trade, and it does not exist now. Here is the root question: When tariffs were beneficial to the Northern rich and burdensome to everyone else, the United States had tariffs; when "free trade" is beneficial to the Northern rich and a burden to every one else, we have "free trade." Why? I see no reason to expect the Tea Partiers to ask the right questions, much less come up with answers.

We are told that a multibillion-dollar bailout of Goldman Sachs was necessary to save "our" economy. Just recently the buffoon Colin Powell (a museum-quality exhibit of the disconnect between merit and reward) announced that "we" need illegal aliens to operate "our" economy. The Economy, Stupid, has become a monstrous god without any interest in the well-being of his people. Now and then, his priests inform us what sacrifices we must make to keep in his good graces.

Nobody can understand or completely manage a large economy. Surely, there are not many "lessons of history" more obvious and certain than that. But economics is a matter of human thought and action. Human thought and action can be applied to such matters as trade, labor, the money supply, in ways that are better or worse. But better or worse for whom? We need to remember what prosperity is supposed to feel like. But first we must find out who "we" are.

Contributing editor Clyde Wilson writes from the Dutch Fork of South Carolina.

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The Bookman

by Wayne Allensworth

I REMEMBER GRANDDAD as an old man, sitting in his reading chair or working in his garden, but you could still see the younger man in him, the one who had ridden the rails during the Depression, seeking work in California and Oregon with his brother-in-law Vines. He jumped those trains and saw the West, this son of a town sheriff and railroad man who in his youth had seen Geronimo at Fort Sill and met Frank James. He was a working man who always seemed to dress well—I remember a picture of him in a double-breasted suit and snap-brim hat, a flower in his lapel, posing with my grandmother, and even in his work clothes he seemed neat and well groomed. He had a distinguished sounding name—Oliver Armstrong Allensworth—for a man from such a humble background.

And Granddad always had his books with him.

The books reinforced the stories he'd tell: stories of the James boys and the last Comanche war chief, Quanah Parker, and of his travels out West and the Great Depression, and there were old stories passed down in the family. We would sit on a Sunday afternoon in the room where he kept his books in a cabinet next to his reading chair. Sunday afternoons might mean watermelon outside, or the wonderful aroma of my grandmother frying chicken, the best I ever had, in the kitchen of the house that sat on cinder blocks at the end of a gravel road. It had a big yard and a goldfish pond Granddad had built, and you could see the vast garden from the window. There was a Victrola where my grandmother kept her Bob Wills records, thick as plate glass, and pictures of roosters and other animals my Uncle Taft had made. But it was the stories and the books that drew me. Sometimes Granddad would reach for one, and leaf through it and read a passage. It might be from a classic like the *Iliad*, or from an adventure story (he favored Rafael Sabatini and Westerns), a mystery, or a history book. We read everything and savored the words. Sometimes he seemed to have a need to speak them, and we enjoyed every one.

Granddad was a man who read for knowledge and wisdom, but most of all for pleasure. Not entertainment in the sense of a temporary diversion, but for pleasure, which is something else again. Pleasure stays with you, and you are not likely to forget a book that gives you pleasure. Reading for pleasure is a lost art, because the world moves too fast now to savor anything, or to cultivate such pleasures, connecting the words on a page to the sights and sounds around you, the characters to people you know, enjoying the look of the book's cover art and even the smell of the pages, and being able to distinguish a Scribner's from a Doubleday, the New American Library from The Dial Press, right down to the typeface.

Like Granddad, I would sometimes open a favorite book and read particular passages again and again:

> Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. . . . Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.
>
> —*Moby-Dick: or The Whale*, by Herman Melville

I have the Modern Library edition of *Moby-Dick* with the marvelous illustrations by Rockwell Kent.

> This is the verse you grave for me:
> Here he lies where he long'd to be;
> Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
> And the hunter home from the hill.
>
> —*Requiem*, by Robert Louis Stevenson

That passage is from the first book of poetry I ever owned, *One Hundred and One Famous Poems*, compiled by Roy J. Cook. I loved the old-fashioned portraits of the poets, with their beards and high collars. Their dignity was on every page.

> Then they began to climb and they were going to the East it seemed, and then it darkened and they were in a storm, the rain so thick it seemed like flying through a waterfall, and then they were out and Compie turned his head and grinned and pointed and there, ahead,

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> all he could see, as wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white in the sun, was the square top of Kilimanjaro. And then he knew that there was where he was going.
>
> —*The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, by Ernest Hemingway

That is one of the cleanest and clearest passages written by "Papa."

> He was tall and terrible there in the road, looming up gigantic in the half-light. He was the man I saw the first day, a stranger, dark and foreboding, forging his lone way out of an unknown past in the utter loneliness of his own immovable and instinctive defiance. He was the symbol of all the dim, formless imaginings of danger and terror . . . The impact of the menace that marked him was like a physical blow.
>
> —*Shane*, by Jack Schaefer

Granddad loved Westerns, and *Shane* is one of my favorites. I've kept many of the paperbacks he gave me by authors like Louis L'Amour, Luke Short, Max Brand, and this one by Jack Schaefer. It's a Bantam paperback, still in good condition, with that distinctive red rooster on the spine.

Granddad would trade books at a local used-book shop, then let me take the ones I wanted. I would sometimes test the patience of my understanding mother, spending hours in a book shop or at the library, trying to choose, and accumulating so many books that my carpenter father built beautiful bookshelves in the room I shared with my brother, bookshelves with cabinets and a solid desk my son has now, with bookshelves over it. I filled the shelves and then piled the books in boxes in our closet. I still have most of them. Parting with a book was out of the question.

One of the books I have not parted with is an old Bible I keep on my work desk. The King James Bible is one of the most pleasurable of books to read:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
>
> —*John 1:1-4*

Granddad and I both loved mysteries and thrillers and hard-nosed pulps, everything from Sherlock Holmes to Nero Wolfe, from Mike Hammer to Philip Marlow. A book I count among my most prized possessions is *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, a stout and substantial volume I saw at Sears. It was a Christmas gift when I was ten or eleven, and I read those marvelous stories to my children—"Quick Watson, the game's afoot!"—time and again.

> I got up on my feet and went over to the bowl in the corner and threw cold water on my face. After a little while, I felt a little better, but very little. I needed a drink, I needed a lot of life insurance, I needed a vacation, I needed a home in the country. What I had was a coat, a hat and a gun. I put them on and went out of the room.
>
> —*Farewell, My Lovely*, by Raymond Chandler

I think Marlow liked books, too. I don't know what he would have made of Twitter, or the loss of what novelist Larry McMurtry calls the "book culture." McMurtry has lamented the death of that culture, seeing the consumption of data, the "processing" of information streams, and gadgets replacing books. Time for reflection and due consideration is becoming a thing of the past. But I think the author of *Lonesome Dove* and *The Last Picture Show* meant something else, too, and that is the pleasure of reading a book, something wrapped up in the form, appearance, and heft of the written word in print, substantial and memorable in a way that ephemeral words reproduced on a screen cannot be.

The books and the passages and, most of all, the sheer pleasure of the experience of books came back to me while I was straightening out my collection recently, enjoying the handling of the books and the cover art, especially of the science-fiction and fantasy books, and the adventure stories for boys like Tom Swift and the Hardy Boys, the Edgar Rice Burroughs Tarzan stories and Martian books, Jules Verne and H.G. Wells, each one a world of its own, each at one time exciting a boy's sense of wonder with characters that seemed like real people, characters such as Captain Nemo and Ned Land and the Time Traveler. In a favorite spot, at the right time, they came alive, and the act of reading was merged with the lived, the imagined, and the dreamed of.

Corresponding editor Wayne Allensworth resides in Keller, Texas.

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Johnny Johnson

by Christopher Sandford

For Johnny Johnson, it was always Saturday night. He was the stuff of fictional heroes who prevail over their circumstances. A British army doctor who later joined the Royal Navy, Johnny came from a broken home, never married, and eventually saw his only child given up for adoption. When he left school in the depths of the Depression, he had no prospects of a job and turned to medicine because he "thought he might meet girls there," rather than from any burning sense of vocation. He struggled with financial worries and declining health throughout his adult life. It is possible he suffered from some form of personality disorder, or even schizophrenia.

But the world was one vast opportunity for Surgeon Lt.-Cdr. John Robb-Johnson, whom I met in early 1965, when he was 43 and I was 8. Whatever his circumstances, he always believed that the next day, or the next moment, would be better. For him, the glass was always half full; often literally so, as he consumed up to two bottles of gin per day. While he formed few close friendships, Johnny was widely popular and extravagantly generous with his time and money. People loved to hear him talk. He had a bottomless fund of stories, which sometimes became more amusing, or dramatic, over time, but which never failed to hold his audience. Among other things, Johnny had been an Olympic-class oarsman, a professional boxer, a fairground barker, a naturist, a published poet, and a sometime mercenary. When officers in the Kenyan air force attempted a *coup d'état* in August 1982, Johnny immediately made plans to fly to Nairobi and offer his services to the loyalist forces. A fluent Swahili speaker, he reasoned he was "just the sort of unscrupulous bugger" to help maintain the *status quo*, although in the end law and order was restored in his absence. As consolation for missing out on the action, Johnny went off on holiday to Northern Ireland, where one night two members of rival sectarian gangs shot each other in the pub where he was staying. I asked him what he had done. "Assessed the situation," he said. "One of them was dead, and the other was hit in the gut. I stuck my hand in the hole and offered him a brandy until the ambulance arrived."

At the time I met Johnny he was a burly, broad-shouldered man who habitually dressed in grey-flannel trousers and a navy-blue blazer, in whose breast pocket he kept a monocle. After rather abruptly leaving the army, he was serving as the ship's doctor on HMS *Protector*, an ice-patrol vessel commanded by my father. *Protector*'s core mission was to set sail each autumn for Antarctica, and to return to England the following spring. Supervising the physical and psychological welfare of a ship's company of 250 in this most inhospitable of places proved a stern test of Johnny's professional skills. I once asked my father how his friend and subordinate had coped. "Not bad," he said. Then he laughed in a distracted sort of way. "Apart from the seaweed incident."

The "seaweed incident" had come about when *Protector* was in some lonely spot in the South Atlantic, where Johnny had decided it was time for him to carry out a snap inspection of the ship's food-storage locker. He was always rightly keen on maritime hygiene. In this case, something about the texture or quality of the stores struck him as "off," although there were those who subsequently felt that it was Johnny himself who was the more impaired. Whatever the cause, the result was that *Protector*'s meat ration for the month was unceremoniously cast overboard on her doctor's orders. Johnny's substitute diet for the crew of boiled seaweed with a generous rum seasoning was, at best, imaginative and, at worst, toxic—*Protector* duly recorded the Royal Navy's first confirmed cases of scurvy in over a century, the subject of a lively ministerial exchange in the House of Commons.

When Johnny separated from the navy in his late 50's, he spent a month in Saudi Arabia tending to the needs of a large community of British builders employed on a housing complex in Riyadh. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his time in the desert kingdom ended in some acrimony. Walking home from his clinic one day, he was arrested for carrying what was described as a "mobile bar" in his briefcase, imprisoned in medieval conditions, and eventually released on order of King Khalid (or so he insisted) and deported to England. A week later, Johnny presented himself at the same recruitment agency that had placed him and politely enquired if they had a vacancy. The man who greeted him at first failed to make the connection. "Yes," he said. "There's an opening in Riyadh, thanks to some bloody fool of a doctor named . . . ," and that "pretty swiftly" concluded the interview, Johnny recalled.

For the middle-aged bachelor, there was nothing remotely embarrassing or unseemly in showing affection for a young schoolboy. It was all entirely innocent, and, more to the point, it was fun. Looking back on it, it's possible Johnny's fondness for childish rituals like gorging on cake, watching cartoons, or what he called "rotting up" authority figures testified to the stunted emotions still warring inside the globe-trotting doctor. All I knew at the time was that I

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loved him as a substitute father, a figure of power and authority in the outside world, but who liked nothing more than to sprawl on the floor reading aloud from *Winnie the Pooh* (he once translated the story into Latin for my amusement) on a rainy afternoon. For some reason, I lost touch with Johnny between the ages of about ten and twenty. In the meantime, I discovered politics, grew my hair (those were the days), and affected the general air of a distressed motorcycle-gang member. Hearing one day that Johnny was in town, I decided to shock him by walking into the pub dressed in a black leather ensemble and a Chairman Mao cap rakishly pushed back on my head. The last time we met, I had been wearing an English prep-school uniform. When I went in Johnny was sitting at the bar with a large gin, looking completely unchanged. "Ah, Christopher," he said. "What will you have?" We might have been chatting five minutes earlier for all the emotion in his voice. Johnny immediately assumed the role of a drinking companion, one sustained, with occasionally chaotic results for us both, throughout the rest of his life. I suppose he was lonely. Once, he wrote to me, "God, what I would give for a spotty-faced kid to take fishing."

Upon retiring from the navy, Johnny moved back to Portsmouth, where he made several appearances before the local magistrates on various charges—drunk and disorderly, biting a policeman, taking the stage at a meeting of the local Social Democratic Party to denounce the delegates as "a bunch of Castro-loving scum." Although denied long-term employment, he was occasionally able to stand in as a locum for other doctors. Once when driving in a specially equipped radio car to visit a patient, Johnny lost control of the wheel, skidded on some leaves, and ended up trapped upside down in a ditch. He was later found to have suffered a fractured skull. Reaching for the transmitter, Johnny calmly identified himself and told the dispatcher to send two backup vehicles, one for the original patient, the other for him. In his mid-60's, he took up with a Portsmouth woman of about half his age, whom he had hired as a house-cleaner. She already had a common-law husband, a local judo instructor, so the situation was delicate. But Johnny was touchingly gracious when the affair ended and kept the woman's photograph on his desk, alongside that of his departed son.

Some time later, Johnny invited me to join him to watch the annual university boat race in London. I arrived at the pub, which was hot, noisy, and full of tat-

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tooed men in their 20's whose speech was untrammeled by the demands of political correctness. In the thick of this mêlée, Johnny wasn't so much sitting in a chair as sprawling in it almost full-length, legs crossed, laughing and joking, the picture of self-contentment. Not for the first time, I could only marvel at his powers of social assimilation. Abandoning the boat race, we moved on to a jazz club somewhere under Piccadilly Circus, where Johnny, typically, insisted on buying everyone's drinks for the rest of the night. In his wallet, he kept a slip of paper with a favorite quote, attributed to William Penn, which dictated his daily spending habits. "Any good thing I can do, any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it now; let me not defer it nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again." We never knew where the money came from, and found out only when the local bank starting proceedings to recover what Johnny cheerfully called a "stupendous" overdraft.

Was he for real? The general consensus was that, while Johnny might occasionally embroider the detail, his instinct for controversy, coupled with his zeal for full-bath immersion in whatever captured his imagination, put the rest of us to shame for the bounded horizons of our own little lives. He really did engage kings and heads of state in correspondence on esoteric matters of public health and thought nothing of flying to Lagos or Bombay in order to deliver sometimes unsolicited speeches on the subject. He really did have an effusively signed photograph of himself and General Zia-ul-Haq, the latter fixing him with a shark-like grin, on his wall. He really did cause a near-riot when he harangued a medical forum in Sri Lanka on that state's abnormally high incidence of liver disease, which Johnny attributed not to the traditional alcoholic causes but to a variety of other "lifestyle" factors which, he boomed from the platform, "more properly belong[ed] to the Biblical cities of the plain." And, finding himself in the receiving line to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury following a service of consecration at Westminster Abbey, he really did tell the Primate of All England that his sermon (somehow touching, at length, on gay rights) had been a disgrace to the occasion. I was next in line, and can still remember the look on the prelate's face.

Probably like most of Johnny's circle, I adored and shrank from the performance in about equal measure—delighting in the energy of excess, blanching when he unleashed one of his sometimes spectacularly tactless oratorical thunderbolts. But there was rather more to him, I learned, than his ability alternately to charm and shock. As Johnny himself observed, one doesn't survive to posterity by being colorful. His own claim was spiritual—it was as a child of God that he asked to be judged.

The first real hint of Johnny's faith came one night when, after listening to me interminably complain about something, he said quietly, "Shall we read Psalm 88? It covers this ground rather well." I suppose I had then been friends with him for some 20 years. We knew that he liked to attend Sunday-morning services at Portsmouth Cathedral (handily adjacent to his favorite pub), and that he often broke into a lusty a cappella version of "Zadok the Priest" at inappropriate moments, such as on a crowded commuter train, but that was it. Judging from his surface behavior, Johnny seemed to believe that man was merely trapped in the rubble of some cosmic joke with no punch line—that "Godot," as he'd once remarked in another context, "wouldn't join us today." But now I gradually came to see that Johnny's Rabelaisian public image coexisted with—and, to some extent, defined—a singularly robust Christianity. He had no use for most of what he called the "happy-clappy" clergy. "They're really social workers, and they sweat with embarrassment when you talk to them about God," he said. It was the "great position" of the Church that Johnny respected, the fact that She had lasted for centuries and still provided "the only real manifesto about how to live life." In time, I saw him apply this conviction in a number of ways, from volunteering in the cathedral kitchen, to providing unpaid medical help to the indigent. A friend remembers being at a party where Johnny's long-suffering bank manager "rather indiscreetly told me that Johnny was having cash-flow problems. He was down to fifty pounds. The man and I talked, then he left and Johnny came over and asked how I was. 'Broke,' I said, 'in mind, body, and pocket.' Johnny immediately laughed. 'Do you want any money? I can give you fifty quid.'" That gesture summed up the man. Without ever seeming to bear an Atlas-like burden for the public weal, Johnny was supremely generous with what he called "the few faculties" granted him, more often than not anonymously so; there are those who might be surprised even now to learn the identity of the benefactor who scrubbed the floors of their church or left a box of toys outside their back door in the dead of night.

"I may have made a mess of my career," Johnny told me not long before he died. "But I don't think I've made one of my life." Nor do I. To me, he remains the embodiment of everything a Christian might aspire to be—charitable, compassionate, and above all utterly fearless in his refusal to accept handed-down truths. He may have been an affront to the Church's more blue-rinse image, but Johnny's priorities were rarely those of the world. Without God and without truth, he once said, there was only a "dull little merry-go-round of things and possessions and successes." And the truth is, about those who were lucky enough to know him, that he changed us. I'm here to testify to that.

Christopher Sandford is the author of several biographies, including Polanski *(Palgrave Macmillan).*

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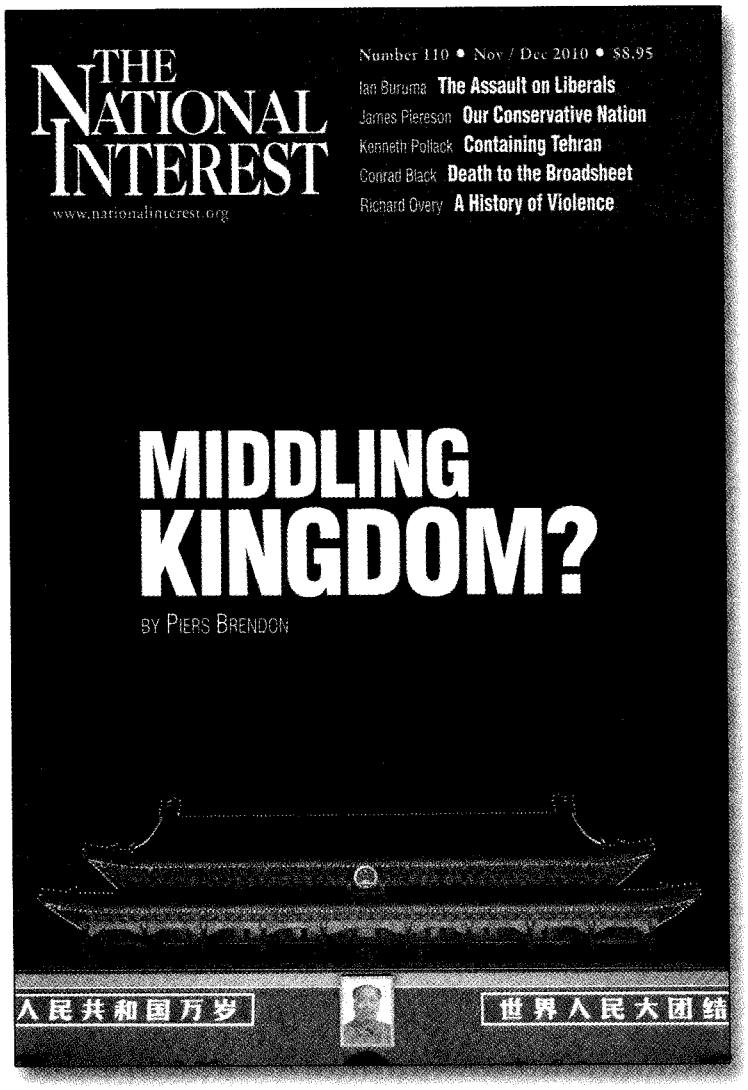

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Leaving London, 2005

ON THE WAY to the airport we were stuck in systaltic traffic, my taciturn Charon and I, and the weather mimicked the condition, blazing with sunshine like a Neapolitan urchin's smile one moment, dourly hawking tickets to the Museum of British Cloud the next.

At times the sky was the color of Delft tile, reminding the traveler that Holland was only £49.99 away; then suddenly it would become a glassy gray, like a medical specimen in a jar, and the disgusted eye would turn for relief to the colors of buildings, to the shapes of vehicles and the clothes of pedestrians. The Earl of Shaftesbury believed that the essential quality that anyone who wishes to appreciate art must possess is disinterestedness. This I had to spare.

The colors, the forms, the costumes—all were signposts on the motorway of longing; fetishes of man's desire, tabernacles of lucre. Narcissistic glass of the buildings reflected their fundamental superficiality; architectural concrete, cracking under the burden of modernity like a Chinese fortune cookie, intimated that nothing is forever; green, magenta, and ochre exalted primary emotion in a Swahili of designer newspeak. Styrofoam coffees in hand, office girls scurried like mutant insects with female faces, fashion fleshings protruding from their futuristic tabards like fluorescent tubes. Trucks blew their horns in the rush to deliver exclusivity to millions, eager to unload polyester Brabant lace, synthetic myrrh, and frozen New Zealand lamb.

A sports car recalled the lipstick introduced, rather tactlessly, to the European market just after World War I, Rouge d'Enfer by Guerlain. "What it must cost to keep that on the road," said the driver. "Just the insurance." But already Baudelaire wrote in praise of feminine artifice, while Apollinaire thought that fashion did for women what literature had done for words.

"$E=MC^2$" topped a squat tower on our left. Was that an educational message or a company name? "They're in film," said the driver. We were somewhere in Chiswick, near the roundabout, caught up in weekend chaos on the road to the capital of love. Earthly love, with its rational calculus and sartorial underpinnings, its pragmatic pretensions and liberating claims; just the kind I wanted most to escape, to transcend, to disprove; the very goal I had striven so long to attain, like the taxi immobilized by road works; the eventual destination I had been commanded to seek by every one of the civilization's signposts.

Presently, the onion dome of the Russian church came into view, a perverse irruption of azure into a heaven of uniform gray and the cityscape's rusting modernity just beneath it. My son had been christened there, at the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, who surely knew back then that the tale of a father lost somewhere among the phantasms of mature capitalism, as mariners were once lost at sea, was worth telling. Instinctively, I made the sign of the cross, and even thought to tell the driver to take the exit, but moments later the prospect looked torturous. What use is a Byzantine God to a deracinated Byzantine?

No, if there was an alternative, it lay neither in man nor in God, but in chance, in the free throw of dice that governed everything in between. All of a sudden the apparition was so real I thought I could feel its presence inside the taxi. There he was, the original dealer in the casino of many private rooms, stopping the clock at 59 minutes past the hour, turning plonk into Chateau Margaux, healing the hypochondriac and infecting the captain of industry with acedia . . . Truly without number the quizzical miracles in his impartial gift, and one of them could change my life.

Was I not looking to find an exit from earthly torpor, an herb that cured latent materialism, in a woman whose smile would make me lose my calculating head? Had I not looked high and low for unmediated desire, for the truth of love unsullied by compromise? Chance alone could answer such prayers, and I believed that one day it must.

Any second now the driver might make a wrong turn, and with God's help get lost and end up by Gunnersbury Tube, at the church whither a stateless migrant, in flowery kerchief and scuffed boots, had traveled since early in the morning to beg the priest for assistance. She's called Olga, for argument's sake, and as I watch her in profile, lighting a penny candle by the image of the Mother of God of Kazan, I realize that the resemblance is absolute, that the genetic match to the ideal of womanhood of which I myself have never been aware is something more than an optical illusion born of human vanity and faithlessness; that it is one of those real things, of which there are hardly any left in the world beyond pastoral Chiswick and outside this moment, things by which life was measured in the days when love was yet among them.

But the traffic jam held. Einstein's formula was still back there somewhere, stuck to my shoulder like a mustard poultice. ◆

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Top-Heavy Schools

by William Murchison

IT WAS ANOTHER DAY, you know—back when President James A. Garfield could define a university as "Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other." Which was to say, a great teacher—Hopkins being the renowned president of Williams College—needed only the opportunity to sit down, unencumbered, and teach. You know, without special assistants, everyday assistants, assistants to assistants, vice presidents for this-that-and-the-other, directors, panjandrums, proconsuls, and so on to oversee and remunerate.

But, of course, it was a long time ago, as Prof. Jay P. Greene reminds us, inferentially, in his recent thumping of the modern collegiate infrastructure, "Administrative Bloat at American Universities: The Real Reason for High Costs in Higher Education," a report undertaken on behalf of the Goldwater Institute.

Whatever does the gentleman mean by "bloat"? He means the increase, at 198 major public and private universities, in administrative personnel, between 1993 and 2007—39 percent per 100 students, *versus* an increase of merely 18 percent in teaching, research, and service personnel. The Greene study emphatically does not point to a huge increase in Mark Hopkins types; instead, to an eruption in the number of functionaries who don't perform the central task of a university—that of teaching—but do support work of various sorts. An army of support workers overshadows more and more the teaching corps.

"As universities increase their enrollment and receive more money," Greene writes,

> they expand the ranks of administrators even more rapidly. Rather than achieving economies of scale in administration so that more resources can be redirected to core functions, America's leading universities increased administration significantly faster than enrollment and almost twice as fast as teaching, research, and service.

The tendency of large institutions of any kind—governmental, military, religious, corporate—to pile bureaucrat upon bureaucrat is much remarked. No one is entitled to much surprise, possibly, at Professor Greene's statistics; but the oddity of the thing, in an academic context, is hard to miss. A university exists, theoretically, to teach: to exhibit knowledge and inspire its acquisition. For this you don't need—do you?—an oversized backstage support force. You need, one would think, not more clutter but less.

Well, hey, it doesn't work that way. Academia is into clutter of a very expensive but not necessarily productive character, financed in no small degree by students. Take old President Hopkins' own Williams College. There, according to evidence recently noted by Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus in the *Los Angeles Times*, the price of logs seems to be rising astronomically. Tuition at Williams is $41,434, "or an inflation-adjusted 3.2 times [the cost] 30 years ago." Hacker and Dreifus relate that "Tuition at public universities . . . has risen at an even faster rate. The University of Illinois' [*sic*] current $13,658 is six times its 1980 rate after adjusting for inflation. San Jose State's $6,250 is a whopping 11 times more." It doesn't sound so bad when measured against the price of outdoor seating at Williams, but it's a pile of money during a major recession.

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equated somehow with academic progress! Here and there it may, but you don't take such suppositions on faith.

In the October issue of *Chronicles* I wrote an account of an ideological dust-up at the University of Texas, whose leadership voted to cleanse a dorm from the taint of racism by changing its name, in repudiation of its namesake's role in organizing a Reconstruction era chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. As the controversy over what to do about this affront to 21st-century sensibilities heated up and boiled over, I noted that a major player amid the ruckus was the university's vice president for "diversity and engagement." For what?! I think the university's notion in creating the post, whenever that was, was to double down on the idea of UT as a place seriously confronting present and future demographic shifts. Possibly "engagement" goes hand in hand with that mission—I couldn't say. The job sounds as much like a ministry of propaganda as it does anything else. But in the modern academic context, that is hardly a surprise.

Jay Greene, who is professor of, yes, educational reform at the University of Arkansas, notes that university staff have blossomed with "diversity" and "sustainability" types, in line with society's embrace of these causes—anyway, with those elements of society that see universities as obligated to a broader definition of the teaching function than Mark Hopkins embraced. A modern university seems to think it must somehow become all things to all people, and not a mere cultivator of intellects and morals.

That would partially explain the new emphasis on administrators. A complementary explanation, Greene says, is that universities plain *can do it*, given their reliance on government funds and private gifts. Not to mention, I would add, those whopping tuition increases. The universities have the cash, in other words; or they did before the market crash (which took place immediately after the period examined in Greene's study) deflated their endowments. If they relied more on tuition to cover their costs, he says, their aspirations might weaken. Students might not enjoy funding vice presidencies for diversity and engagement.

I don't entirely buy into Greene's contention that the way to pop the bureaucratic bubble is to reduce government subsidies. "If tuition," says he,

> had to cover a larger share of university expenses, families would be more cost-conscious and force administrators to trim administrative expenses while concentrating resources on their core missions of teaching, research, and service.

Maybe so, and maybe not. If students had all that much say about tuition rates—or their parents did, for that matter—administrators across the country would surely be hiding under their beds from mobs swinging nooses and crying out for vengeance.

That lawmakers—politicians, in other words—are going to cut university subsidies for high-minded reasons like fighting administrative bloat seems to me a quaint notion. Why not (from the legislative standpoint) just pass the money along to the schools and leave parents to figure out the consequences? From tuition rates of 41K, as at Williams, there could indeed be parental recoil. Still, the problem seems to me much deeper than mere, if I may so speak, money. A college or university, in contemporary terms, is a public utility. Who cares how much old-fashioned "teaching" goes on there? Isn't the basic utilitarian idea the degree itself—the certification of competence and readiness for the job market? If not, what are all those millions of young people doing there, against the relatively small number drawn as recently as 60 or 70 years ago to the enterprise of learning?

Plenty of teaching still goes on in universities, but a plausible assumption is that if the average college student encountered some gowned and betassled scholar sitting on a log, with dusty volume in hand, open to Aristotle's *Ethics*, the temptation would be to hightail it in panic. Or, with more high-minded address, to call 911: "Better get here fast—some weird guy is trying to pick up students."

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Corresponding editor William Murchison is a syndicated columnist.

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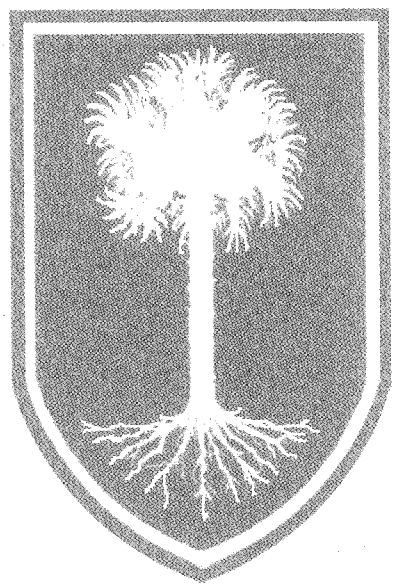

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Hitting the Wall

by Mark G. Brennan

On October 8, Americans awoke to government reports that the domestic economy had shed another 95,000 jobs in September. Despite the billions of dollars mailed to select citizens in the form of stimulus checks and the politicized bailouts of protected industries, U.S. policymakers have failed to resuscitate the moribund economy or coax unemployment down from its ten-percent perch. But Washington's latest strategy for jumpstarting business activity—"quantitative easing"—should horrify taxpayers because of its eerie resemblance to the efforts of Dr. Frankenstein.

Compared with this new stimulus effort, Mary Shelley's chilling tale has a relatively happy ending. Dr. Frankenstein's flat-headed ogre murdered only three innocents before fleeing into the arctic snows. By contrast, the viral effects of quantitative easing pose existential risks to the American economy, the U.S. dollar's reserve-currency status, and the global financial system. If you liked the currency policies of Weimar Germany's Reichsbank or Robert Mugabe's monetary skullduggery in Zimbabwe, then you'll love the Federal Reserve Bank's current flirtation with disaster.

The federal government spends more money doing things most Americans don't want done—drone attacks on Afghani weddings, maintaining the domestic sugar price at twice the international market price—than it is able to pay for by extracting tax dollars from those same Americans. As a result, the government must issue Treasury bonds to finance its deficit.

Few investors see any attraction in ten-year U.S. government bonds, which are currently yielding less than 2.5 percent, especially after factoring in the possibility of default. So instead of offering a higher rate to entice the Chinese or other high-savings nations to buy our dicey debt, the government has decided to buy its own bonds.

How can the federal government afford to purchase bonds, when it is already out of cash?

That is where quantitative easing comes in. The mechanics of the process are simple. First, the Federal Reserve creates money *ex nihilo* and credits the new matter to its own account. Then, with its make-believe bankroll, the Federal Reserve uses its electronic funds to purchase U.S. government bonds. (The policy's proponents scoff at those who equate such financial legerdemain with "printing money": Nowadays, money creation happens electronically. Memories of overheated Weimar printing presses only frighten those who are fixated on our benighted financial past.)

The central bank's technocracy believes that by taking money—or, in this case, computer bytes—from the government's left pocket and putting them into its right pocket, economic recovery will ensue. If only it were so simple, or at least not so risky.

Former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, whose two-decades-long easy-money regime was responsible for the last real-estate bubble as well as the late-90's stock-market orgy, warned attendees at a foreign-exchange conference about the bogeyman ready to spring from the Fed's computers. Bloomberg News quoted Greenspan as telling the assembled financiers that "We're increasing the debt held by the public at a pace that is closing [the gap between our debt and] any measure of borrowing capacity."

In laymen's terms, Greenspan's warning reflects the law that a borrower can only carry so much debt before lenders declare him bankrupt. Thus, the judgment of one former central-bank demigod not previously known for monetary responsibility: The United States is running headlong into the brick wall known as borrowing capacity.

It will be bad enough when international bond buyers stop purchasing U.S. government debt. But Armageddon will come when those bondholders decide to dump the paper they already own, driving up U.S. interest rates. Imagine how much worse the U.S. economy will perform when adjustable-rate mortgages rise from 8 percent to 14 percent, and credit cards jack up their 1-percent teaser rates to 19.9 percent, overnight. The national funeral for the domestic consumer will have to be canceled, as the only Americans liquid enough to attend will prefer the comfort of their Swiss chalets to lining Connecticut Avenue in the rain.

What will happen in the near future when the Fed unleashes its second round of quantitative easing—inflation—on the global economy?

Capital goes where capital is treated best. And today, the developing world treats capital better than the stagnant developed nations of the north do. The recent inflationary policies of the United States and the European Union have flooded the economies of Brazil and Indonesia with capital looking to exploit the higher interest rates and growth prospects common in developing regions. But this capital has no national loyalty or moral code; it will flee these regional upstarts at the first sign of economic weakness or political instability. Leaders of the developing world have learned through experience that foreign capital drives up the value of local currencies, which then impedes their ability to export.

In their pursuit of higher returns, global financiers arbitrage away the developing country's lower labor and raw-materi-

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al cost advantages. This process devastates the host country when the parasitical capital reverses course by dumping the local bonds and currency. In the wake of this violent process lie unemployed workers, shuttered factories, and, in some cases, smoldering political unrest. As tempers flare and barricades go up in front of the national palaces straddling the equator, fund managers in New York and London will report successful quarterly results to their deep-pocketed investors, whose loyalty to the fund manager is as illusory as the fund manager's loyalty to the economies in which he invests.

The leaders of developing countries will want to rethink just how well they treat foreign capital, which remains forever free of national, ethnic, or moral attachments. Thailand's Finance Minister Korn Chatikavanji has done just that. On October 11, he proposed a 15-percent withholding tax on interest payments and a capital-gains tax on Thai bonds, all in an effort to temper the recent rise in Thailand's currency, the baht. Other leaders will likely follow.

In October, economist David Carbon of DBS in Singapore told the *Wall Street Journal* that every day another two billion dollars flows from developed countries to East Asian upstarts. Carbon fears that trillions of dollars from the Fed's first quantitative easing—"QE1"—have yet to be spent, even as the Fed has started to test the market's appetite for "QE2." The financial press could do us all a great service by eschewing the monikers proposed by the Fed and naming this ill-fated inflationary vessel Titanic.

Mark G. Brennan writes from New York City.

The Long View

The editors of *Chronicles* know that the battle for the soul of our civilization will rage until the end of time. You can help *Chronicles* stay in the fight for generations to come by making a gift to the endowment of The Rockford Institute, publisher of *Chronicles*. The Institute is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, and gifts to the Institute are tax-deductible to the limit of the law. Your gift can take the form of:

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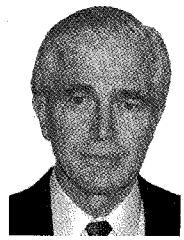
The Social Network
Produced and distributed by Columbia Pictures ◆
Directed by David Fincher ◆
Screenplay by Aaron Sorkin ◆



Include Me Out

The Social Network concerns Mark Zuckerberg and his cybercreation, Facebook, the website that now boasts 500 million active users and has made its "inventor" a multi-billionaire. On his site, you're free to divulge your most praiseworthy, intimate, and perverse behaviors to thousands. Merely register, and you instantly become a star, inviting the scrutiny of your "friends," as the site identifies your correspondents. Furthermore, your chosen circle can grow exponentially, since each of your friends has the option of suggesting you to their friends, who can likewise do the same. Should you be up to something sufficiently exceptional or weird or lurid, your circle could possibly rival that of the Almighty's, having a center that's everywhere and a circumference nowhere. Like certain celebrities, you'll taste Lucifer's temptation. Don't you deserve to outshine the Bible's out-of-date deity?

Not that Zuckerberg designed his site with such blasphemy in mind. No, his sinning was far less grand. His enterprise was driven by jealousy and anger. He wanted to strike back at the girl who had dumped him and, while he was at it, all those other girls whom he assumed would be only too glad to snub him in favor of more presentable swains. At least this is the way Aaron Sorkin and David Fincher have dramatized it in *The Social Network*. They've instructed Jesse Eisenberg to play Zuckerberg as a hopelessly gauche young man whose behavior suggests he may be suffering from Asperger syndrome, the form of autism characterized by high intelligence, obsessive focusing, and a striking lack of empathy.

We meet Zuckerberg first in a college bar with Erica (Rooney Mara), a pretty Boston University coed. He's trying to impress her with his Harvard connections and how he intends to make it into one of the school's prestigious Final Clubs. It's important to know the right people, he explains. As he patters on, she becomes increasingly restive and finally excuses herself, saying she has some studying to do. He expresses astonishment. After all, how much study time would anyone need to put in at BU? This is a step too far. Erica takes aim and fires. "You're going to be successful, and rich," she tells him with seeming sweetness. "But you're going to go through life thinking that girls don't like you because you're a nerd. And I want you to know, from the bottom of my heart, that that won't be true. It'll be because you're an asshole."

The rest of the film will confirm her prediction implicitly, while its conclusion will do so explicitly when another young woman observes, "You're not an asshole, Mark; you're just trying too hard to be one."

Stung by Erica's dismissal, Zuckerberg runs to his dorm, where he works through the night hacking into the other dormitories' websites, electronically snatching the profiles of their coeds complete with headshots. With this digital information, he constructs his own website, Facemash. Each page features pictures of two coeds and invites users to choose which is lovelier and make whatever other comments they wish. Facemash, indeed. It's Zuckerberg's kick in the face to the gals who think him unworthy. The girls are outraged, and the boys delighted. Soon Harvard's server is so overloaded with male responses to Zuckerberg's invidious invitation that it crashes. It seems that, despite the *de rigueur* training in tolerance and gender awareness throughout prep school, the Harvard gentlemen are simply raring to demean the ladies.

For this stunt, Zuckerberg is put on probation, but it's no big deal. He's become an overnight campus celebrity. The Winklevoss twins, prominent members of the Porcellian Club, the most exclusive of the Final Clubs, invite him to work with them on their idea for a social website to be called HarvardConnection. It will be exclusive, of course, inviting only the best of the best to participate. Then, as if to signal their devotion to exclusivity, the Winklevi, as Zuckerberg comes to call them, meet him in the bicycle room of their club, a foyer to its inner sanctum to which Zuckerberg cannot be admitted. With gracious *noblesse oblige*, they offer him a sandwich. No wonder the Jewish wunderkind came to betray these handsome WASP scholar-athletes.

Zuckerberg has been described by many commentators as being an outsider's outsider, a young man insulted by the privileged's closed doors. Using the Winklevi's idea, he devises the website that will become Facebook and takes it online without acknowledging their admittedly small role in its inception. From this moment, the war is on. Eventually, the Winklevi bring suit against him, as does Eduardo Saverin, Zuckerberg's classmate and closest friend who put up the money with

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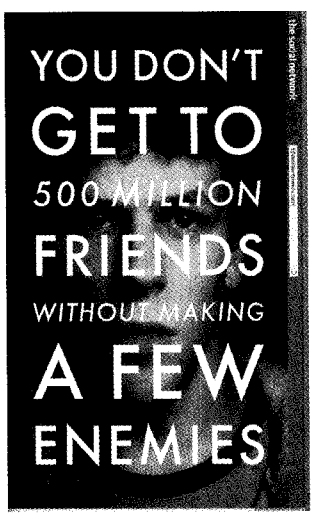
which the site was launched, only to be iced out once it became profitable. Their suits have been settled now, with the Winklevosses coming away with $65 million added to their already bursting trust funds, while Saverin may be over $100 million to the good. Although both suits' legal merits were questionable at best, there was no trial. Zuckerberg's lawyers realized he would never prevail before a jury. He was simply too unlikably arrogant. Besides, people who have neither the connections nor the wit to escape jury duty rarely sympathize with billionaires.

Also notably lacking sympathy for Facebook's mastermind are Sorkin and Fincher. While I thoroughly enjoyed watching their clever film, afterward I couldn't help feeling that it was exceptionally cruel. Zuckerberg may well be the shit they portray him to be, but he's 26 and was 20 when he initiated his site. In short, he's a kid with exceptional skills and luck who behaved badly toward some privileged frat boys. And if, as Sorkin's script strongly suggests, he suffers from Asperger's, should he be held fully accountable for his unpleasantness? When interviewers have brought up the issue, Sorkin has hidden behind the same kind of reasoning deployed by other Hollywood slanderers such as Ron Howard and Akiva Goldsman, who shamelessly fabricated the life of Princeton physicist John Nash in *A Beautiful Mind* and despicably besmirched Max Baer in *Cinderella Man*. Sorkin has said that he was making a movie entertainment, not a documentary, and therefore was not restricted to telling the factual truth. Really? I wonder how he would feel should someone make a film about his life and career in which his work on *The West Wing* television series was shown to be clandestine propaganda motivated by, let's say, a Marxist revolutionary agenda accompanied by an abiding desire to mock America's Christian heritage? Would that be OK, Aaron?

I hold no brief for Zuckerberg, about whom I know very little. From reading about him, especially a fascinating *New Yorker* profile by Jose Antonio Vargas, I gather he's a snotty brat. So does this give Sorkin the right to vilify him in a film that hundreds of millions will see and largely take as the whole truth? The movie will forever shape the public perception of this 26-year-old, pursuing him to his grave. By comparison, Orson Welles treated William Randolph Hearst with gentlemanly decency, declaring the newspaper magnate provided no more than a suggestion on which to build his wholly fictional *Citizen Kane*.



Another annoyance: Sorkin gives only scant attention to what is most important about Facebook. That it's become the locus of reckless greed and litigious acrimony pales beside its value as a cautionary harbinger. As the Palo Alto sharpie and Napster scammer Sean Parker (Justin Timberlake) puts it to the beguiled Zuckerberg, "We lived on farms, then we lived in cities, and now we're gonna live on the internet!" Living on the internet? Yes, I'm afraid, and it's happening at the expense of privacy. One of the ways Facebook makes its enormous profits is by sharing with advertisers and researchers what its users so eagerly reveal about themselves. If you were retained to reach potential consumers of a new, exotic, and unusually expensive beer, wouldn't you like to know who is regularly shelling out $19 for a six-pack of Dogfish Fort or $9 for a four-pack of Brooklyn Chocolate Stout? You'd likely find your hops gourmands boasting their quaffing habits on Facebook. Should you want to locate scapegraces, you could do worse than putting yourself forth as a potential "friend" on the site, as has the FBI. Zuckerberg has said that we live in an age when privacy is an "evolving social norm." Undoubtedly true. And what a blessing for our public planners and government snoops. Spotting dissent obligingly self-revealed online will make their work so much easier. The potential for internet abuse is manifold: everything from stalking the young to spreading pornography to empowering those who think that what we need to flourish is a well-informed police state.

In *The Phenomenon of Man* (1955), the French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin speculated that humanity was witnessing the development of what he called the noosphere. With this neologism derived from the Greek words *nous* (mind) and *sphere* (realm), Chardin was denoting what he thought of as a collective consciousness enabled by the various communication instruments devised in the modern period. He foresaw a day when the then-incipient computer technology would bind us together in an intellectual and spiritual embrace. We would gain an immensely deeper understanding of who we were and where we were going. The noosphere, in effect, would be evolution become conscious of itself. It would be our next phase, during which humanity would work in concert toward achieving its destiny, which he dubbed the Omega Point. I suppose this was Chardin's version of universal salvation.

I recall being impressed by his speculations when I first read him in the late 60's. Now I wonder. Did Chardin foresee Zuckerberg's confessional, collectivizing Facebook as one more step toward the Omega Point?

If this is the noosphere, I'm with the great Sam Goldwyn: Include me out. ◆

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Taki Theodoracopulos

Common Slobbery

THE ONLY TIME I saw Bill Clinton in the flesh was four years ago in the London Ritz. I was having lunch with Leopold and Debbie Bismarck and the mother of my children, as I call Princess Alexandra Schoenburg-Hartenstein, my wife. There were Krauts galore plus some English friends, and we were celebrating Alexandra's birthday, which falls on September 26. Men were in dinner jackets, ladies in long dresses. Then in came Clinton, wearing a sleeveless sort of jumper over a T-shirt, with two black guys in jeans and outrageously gaudy windbreakers. The only ones properly dressed were the myriad of Secret Service personnel, all paid by yours truly, the American taxpayer.

Once they ensconced themselves at a table, I asked to speak to the maître d', whom I know well, and demanded he throw the bums out. He refused because of Clinton's position as ex-president. I don't think I've ever felt as helpless as I did that day, especially after my wife told me that she would leave if I insulted Clinton, which I was ready to do. Manners, like courage on the battlefield, are not something Clinton is familiar with, and forelock-tugging maître d's are not making it any easier for those of us who still believe in old-fashioned values.

Let's face it. Coarseness, violence, dishonesty, and lawlessness threaten to spread into every corner of life. To give one example: Spitting in public in all civilized societies has traditionally been an almost imprisonable offense. Nowadays, it is common. Black people and Hispanics, I have noticed, spit more than whites, New York City being the spit capital of the Western world. Another brutality is dress. Just as familiarity breeds contempt, informality generates disrespect. Can you imagine Calvin Coolidge or Herbert Hoover answering questions about what type of underwear they wore? The slob Clinton did, and some people even thought it cute. Can you imagine Churchill in a track suit, or even the criminal FDR in Bermuda shorts saying, "Call me Frank"?

It's the eagerness to play slob by people who should know better that gets me. As if we didn't have enough sloppiness already. Airports nowadays resemble locker rooms, with grotesquely overweight people waddling in their track suits and disgusting sneakers. When I first flew across the Atlantic in 1948, we had beds in first class, and everyone was dressed to the nines. In fact, I don't think they would have allowed anyone dressed in a sweatsuit to board. This went on until well into the 70's. Then came the peanut farmer, the first American president to address the people wearing a sweater and jeans. Carter was a disaster sartorially, but he was a far better president than Clinton, Bush, and Obama could ever hope to be.

Bill Clinton was the first slob president, a terrible dresser who favored sneakers and sweat clothes when he played golf. He and his ghastly cronies view elegance as a villain, an antipopulist conspiracy of those born to privilege. Popular culture teaches us that fashion should be liberating. It is a clumsy argument made by philistines who possess the sensibilities of a Stalinist bureaucrat. High glamour once ruled Hollywood during its golden age. Now stars look like garage mechanics, which many of them probably were. Once upon a time actors spoke wonderful English with contrived upper-class accents. The old Central European Jews who controlled Hollywood insisted on it. The younger generation of Jews who control it now think that there's more money to be made by dumbing down and dressing down. It is the age of the common man, after all.

Well, yes and no. The shabbiness of the modern male and female comes at the expense of a society unashamed of its vices. The arrogant disdain shown by the phony hippie movement of the 60's was matched only by the hippies' selfishness and greed. Sleaziness like Madonna's may be in vogue today, but look what her ilk has done to civility and common courtesy. I knew the game was up when about 15 years ago I arrived at the Athens tennis club and asked a young man working as a porter at the front desk the time of my scheduled match. (It was a veterans' tournament.) I addressed him in the formal plural. He answered in the informal singular—and rather rudely, too. So I put my racket down on his desk, reminded him of my name, past championships I had won, and my age, and demanded to be addressed in the same way I had addressed him or else. He was dumbfounded. "What's the big deal?" he asked, or something to that effect.

People are now taught that informality makes us equal. Well, some will always be more equal than others, but for the record, smart dress and good manners have nothing to do with class. They have to do with pride and a sense of achievement. The great Charles Lindbergh wore a bow tie on his first Atlantic crossing. The grotesque Bill Clinton did not wear a tie at the Ritz. ◆

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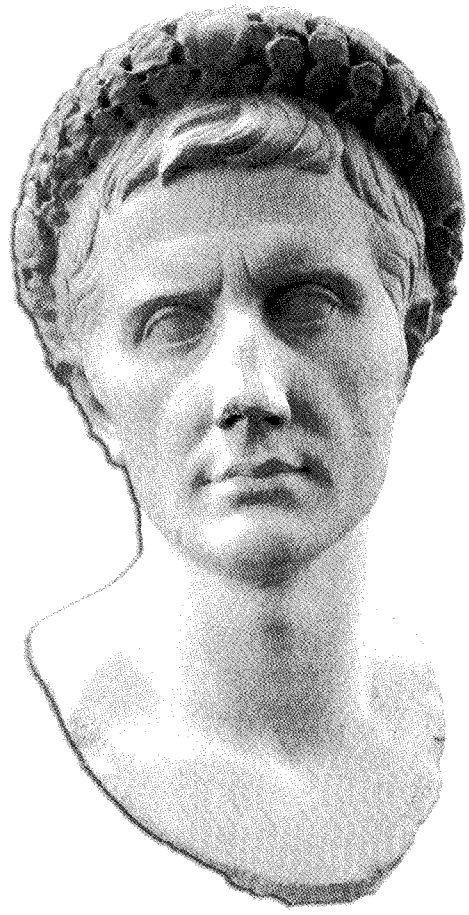

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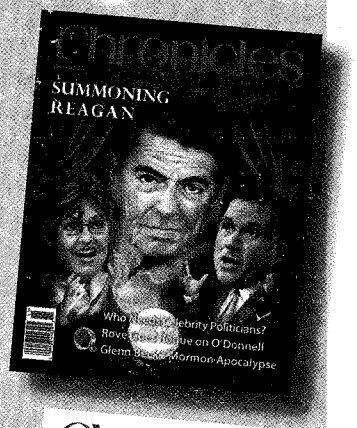

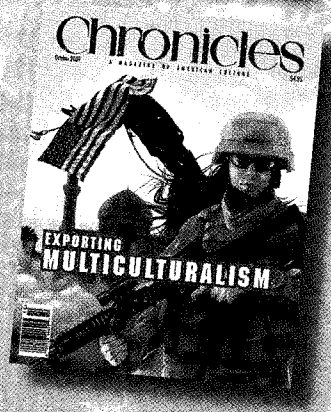

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